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# THE THEOLOGY OF CRISIS

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BY

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TO MY FRIEND
E. OLIVE DUTCHER

## FOUNDATION OF THE SWANDER LECTURESHIP

The Swander Lectureship in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States, located at Lancaster, Pa., was founded by the Reverend John I. Swander, D.D., and his wife Barbara Kimmell Swander, for the twofold purpose of promulgating sound Christological Science and erecting a memorial to their daughter, Sarah Ellen Swander, born April 30th, 1862, died September 29th, 1879, and to their son, Nevin Ambrose Swander, born August 7th, 1863, died March 29th, 1884. It shall be known as the "Sarah Ellen and Nevin Ambrose Swander Lectureship." For its maintenance a sum of money was given to the Board of Trustees of the said Theological Seminary the interest of which is to be applied for the publication of lectures in book form, in accordance with the conditions defined by the terms which accompanied the conveyance of the fund into the hands of the aforenamed Board of Trustees.

These lectures are delivered by members of the Faculty of the Theological Seminary, and others whom the Faculty may select and secure for such service; and while the said Faculty shall guard diligently against the admission of anything into these memorial volumes at variance with the truth as it is in Jesus, they shall not be held responsible for the views of the individual lecturers.

# FOREWORD

The essays which at the request of a number of friends are here made accessible to a wider public, were delivered as the Swander Lectures in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States at Lancaster, Pa., in the autumn of the year 1928; and they were in part repeated at the Central Theological Seminary, Dayton, O.; the Western Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Princeton Theological Seminary; the Divinity School in Harvard University; Hartford Theological Seminary; and Union Theological Seminary, New York.

The author owes to the last-named school, where he studied as a Fellow in the year 1919–20, the opportunity of improving his knowledge of the speech and mind of the United States. In the work of translating this book into English he has had the further advantage of the disinterested assistance of three of his friends—Professor Karl J. Ernst of the Mission House of the Reformed Church in the United States at Plymouth, Wis., who gave counsel while the essays were still in process of composition; President George W. Richards, D.D., of the Theological Seminary at Lancaster, who

made the final revision for publication; and the Reverend Douglas Horton of Brookline, Mass., who translated the Introduction and saw the whole manuscript through the press.

It is a venture at best, however, thus to introduce to the English-speaking world the theology of crisis. Of misunderstandings there will be not a few; and for these the author hastens in advance to accept the major share of the blame. But he begs the reader to consider at once how difficult it is to treat of such momentous questions within so narrow a compass and how urgent it is that just such a provisional and therefore brief introduction should be attempted.

The more than friendly reception which the addresses enjoyed when they were delivered in the United States give the author courage to make the venture of publication. This little book is in reality a token of gratitude for the large-hearted hospitality which was everywhere shown him in America.

H. Emil Brunner.

University of Zurich, Switzerland,
January, 1929.

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# INTRODUCTION

The five addresses in this book have a wholly practical aim. They were not written to support any theory. Like the whole theology behind them, they were born of the need of the hour and are burdened with that need. If having read into them one should lay them aside, disappointed that they give him no answer to the question, What must be done? What ought I to do? he would have grasped their purpose far better than one who enthusiastically recommended them as interesting contributions to the solution of the problem of philosophy. The question they are concerned with is not how one may rightly conceive reality, but how one may rightly exist in the midst of that reality. They are concerned solely with the ethical problem; and therefore they are concerned with Christian faith and nothing else.

Moreover, they are concerned with no other than the *social* ethical problem, for the simple reason that that is the only kind of ethical problem there is. The question how man, how you and I, may really live in this world, how you and I may become *real* in this life, is the same as the question how you and I may live *with* each other, how our *common* life, our agree-

ments or agreements to disagree, may take shape. Man's reality is his life with others. Everything private is necessarily *privatio*, a deprivation, an isolation opposed to life, opposed to man, opposed to God, a deadly abstraction, just as any theory, when it is made a life-principle, becomes also an opposed and deadly abstraction.

Human life is always life in the community. Insofar as it is not, it is not life but death. If this is what "socialism" teaches, the phrase "*Christian* socialism" is a pleonasm, for "Christian" and "social" in that case are two words with one meaning.

There is therefore never any question more important than the social question. It is the same as the question concerning man, and the same as that concerning God. It is important not for our time only, but for all times.

Each era, however, gives the question its own particular accentuation; each has its own areas where the social problem leaps into flame, where the doubtfulness of certain mutual relations becomes exceptionally vivid, or the sense of peril and guilt involved in unsocial living exceptionally painful and terrible. Whether to-day this emphasis should be confined to our economic relationships is questionable; but that these relationships should have their full share of it no one can deny.

But what is society (Gemeinschaft)? How does it come to be? What is the foundation of it?

These questions are not many but one. If we knew what society really was, we should know also what its foundation was, and how it could come into being. And vice versa. What society is, is the last question in the world to be taken for granted, as indeed society itself is the last fact in the world to be taken for granted. Society is something that must be continually striven for. The natural human will is self-seeking, and therefore unsocial. That will, to be sure, desires a kind of common life, but it desires it for the sake of itself, and therefore not for the sake of society. As a matter of fact, the natural man cannot and will not live apart from his neighbor. He wants him near, but he wants him near in order to use him—rudely or politely to use him.

In his self-seeking, man builds whole civilizations, the premises and ends of which are nothing but his will to use his neighbor. Modern economic capitalism is such a system, but though it be one of the most brutal, it is hardly one of the most dangerous, for one recognizes at once the spirit out of which it grows. Far more dangerous than this "publican" type of evil are the finely pharisaical forms which we may describe in one word as ideologies. Ideologies also grow out of self-seeking, but they are really dangerous because they acquire their controls over life surreptitiously. It was with good reason that Jesus used his sternest words not against the publicans but against the Pharisees.

The danger of ideologies is that their poison may be introduced into the organism of mankind so quietly and delicately that neither the one who introduces it nor the one through whom it is introduced need be conscious of it. Every ideology gives off a subtle effluence of self-deception. There have been ideologies which were represented to be secrets of human happiness and as such were welcomed with tempestuous eagerness—but later proved, both in individuals and in society, to be nothing less than agents of destruction. They are never more dangerous than when they condense themselves into catchwords and are taken for axioms. They then, as it were, anesthetize the body of mankind and so allow the destructive operation they introduce to proceed on its course the more freely and more viciously.

It is supremely right for mankind to make its stand against tuberculosis, syphilis, and alcohol, against imperialism and the spirit of acquisitiveness. These monsters must be met—and in that battle what man may hope to be a spectator? But there are still mightier monsters, which are like the pestilence that walketh in darkness. It is positively tragic to see sick humanity, in order to escape the former evident and palpable evils, abandon itself to these ideologies which commit society to the more horrible destruction because they are of slower and smoother growth and lower visibility.

Society, we have said, is not a relationship which may be taken for granted. It is not one of the facts of nature. However true it may be that man is a *ζῷον πολιτικόν*, this does not necessarily imply a society. The instinct of the herd is no more germane to humanity than the instinct of the pack. Society is not a fact, but an act. An act, however, is a deed done consciously. Society grows out of a socially motivated consciousness. If one is concerned for society, he must above all be concerned for this social consciousness. He must know how to distinguish between the consciousness which is a dangerously destructive ideology and the consciousness which really creates society. That is to say, he must know above all what society is, lest when he says society he should mean something that in its character and consequences is simply a disorganizing ideology. The history of the last centuries is full of tragic social mistakes. In a time like our own, when the atmosphere is absolutely saturated with ideologies of the most various kinds, when the printing press is engaged in pouring them forth as never before, when everything is in ferment and in almost unprecedented disintegration, it is doubly necessary to scrutinize those generative thoughts, those deeply hidden roots, out of which may grow either the ideology that poisons society or the will and wisdom that establish it.

The actual form of the human community

is always the product of driving and creative energies of the will, and these themselves the product of an accepted interpretation of life. As there was once a "gothic spirit" which embodied itself visibly in the gothic cathedral, the gothic city-plan, the gothic guild organization, gothic law, and the gothic manner even in details of daily life, there is also a spirit of liberalism which called into existence the French revolution and is responsible for capitalism and modern socialism. The gothic spirit and the liberal alike, however, take their start from ultimates; they each grow from a still deeper root, which for any epoch is a single root, and which we may call that epoch's understanding of life. If I can know what your understanding of life is, I can tell you what sort of state, science, art, and economic and social order you will create. The problem of understanding life is not only the profoundest and most comprehensive but also the most urgent of any era. It is the one great practical question, for by it all particular practical questions are determined. The understanding of life is the womb in which all practical decisions and therefore all material expressions take shape.

The question as to how we ought to understand our existence, however, is no other than the religious question, the question about God, for the understanding of life cherished by a man or an era is the "belief" of that man or that era.

But there is belief and belief. There is a belief which is real—though it may perhaps be hidden to the one who holds it—and there is a belief, on the other hand, which, though held consciously, is unreal. And these may be the possession of the same person, the same group, the same era. There might be a time, for instance, when the "public" belief was Christian, and the private and real belief something quite different—pure paganism, for example. *That* one of the two would show itself to be real which actually governed in the realm of reality. Mankind has always before it, therefore, a double task: to scrutinize the content, and to scrutinize the expressions, of its belief. A proper scrutiny of the content, however, must always yield the same result as a scrutiny of the expressions.

Belief, we have said, is nothing but one's understanding of existence. There are many ways of understanding existence. And these—when they are real, and not merely of the public variety—work themselves out into wholly different forms of life, not only of personal, but of economic and political life as well. Belief is the sap which creates the tree of life, with all its branches, big and little. As is the sap, so is the tree. As is belief—real, and not simply public belief—so is life. But belief, one's understanding of existence, always answers the question What? as well as the question How? The Buddhist not only believes in something differ-

ent from the Christian—we are speaking of the genuine Buddhist and the genuine Christian—but he believes also in a different way. The verb "believe" has another meaning to him; and the meaning of the verb *believe* and the meaning of *what* is believed belong in the strictest sense together. They are elements of a single understanding of life. The what and the how are not separable, because both together constitute one answer to the question, How may I have a practical understanding of my existence?

If this is the relationship between belief and life, if belief—in the sense of one's real understanding—is what gives life its form, then the problem of the right understanding of existence, of true belief, is supreme for every era. Upon the answer to this question everything else will depend, provided it be a question of real and not merely of public belief. By *true* belief, however, nothing can be meant but *that* belief by which man sees himself as he really is. True belief is the opposite of the ideology by which man surrenders to an unreal dream of himself. True belief is the same as true realism. That is to say, man understands himself realistically only when he sees his existence not as isolated but as connected with the ultimately real. So there is no more important or more urgent task for any era than the separation of true belief from all ideologies. These ideologies cannot result in anything but falsity—a falsity which will manifest itself in every area of practical life.

Among "Christians" and even among Christian theologians there are those who think that there are more urgent and practical tasks than that of theology, though theology has for its very problem the true understanding of human life. These people are like such gardeners as might think the branches of the tree more important than the sap because the branches are visible and the sap invisible. There are no real gardeners of this kind, but there are thousands of men and women who make the same error in regard to life as a whole. They turn away from "merely theological questions" to practical questions apparently more important, and do not remark that, in order even to see these practical questions and grasp them in a definite way, they must approach them with a standard of judgment, with an understanding of life already formed, that is, with a definite theology—however unconscious of that theology they may be. It is necessary and it is fruitful to know that the question of belief is always concerned with the practical relations of life; but it is fruitless, it is confusing, it is fatal, to separate practical questions from the belief which makes them practical.

Since this is the meaning of belief, it behooves us, if we are concerned for society, to give primary attention to the matter of discriminating between ideologies and the realistic understanding of existence. It is itself a fatal ideology not to do this—to think, that is, that practical ques-

tions may be divorced from belief. The chief need of our day is that the Western World should be delivered from its colossal ideology and should discover—let me say re-discover—the realistic understanding of life.

The present ideology of the West is the thought of the Enlightenment, the partly idealistic and partly naturalistic rationalism which in the last three hundred years has involved itself in Christianity, caused its inward disintegration, and generally weakened it. The disintegration begins with the orthodoxy of the seventeenth century. The ideology of the Enlightenment rests on a quite definite understanding of human life in which man does not see himself as he is. The danger of it, however, is plainly to be seen in the resultant breaking-up of society—though this was not seen by many for a long time. Rationalism is individualism; it is the reduction of society to atoms. This atomizing process is not overcome by collectivism. On the contrary, collectivism—as, for instance, the Marxian thought presents it—is only the complement of individualism. Capitalism and socialism are twin sisters, however violently, on the common basis of their individualistic rationalism, they may oppose each other. The modern man's understanding of existence—however Christian his public belief may often be—is as a matter of fact almost wholly of this rationalistic-individualistic type. This the socialistic state would not alter to

the slightest degree. That state would be no whit more truly social than the capitalistic, for the underlying ideology is the same for both, save for the color. Opposed to that ideology stands an antagonist which is the only real antagonist it has had since the death of the religions of antiquity—Christianity, the belief of Christians. That belief, we maintain, is the only realistic understanding of human existence, and therefore yields the only real possibility of making a society. Obviously we are not speaking of a belief which is Christian only in name, which has perhaps retained a few remnants from the Christian vocabulary, but is otherwise only disguised idealism or naturalism. We are not interested in words but in meanings. Let idealism dress in the garb of Christianity or not: that makes no material difference. The essential thing is surely that we should not mistake the dress for the wearer.

Here then are raised two or three exceedingly practical questions. To them these lectures are addressed. They are an attempt to distinguish sharply between the Christian and the idealistic or naturalistic understanding of life and at the same time to point out again the true meaning of Christianity. And they are an attempt to show why this is the one practical and decisive problem, with which no other begins to compare in importance. But in this realm they are only a first study.

# THE THEOLOGY OF CRISIS

# I

## THE CRISIS OF THEOLOGY AND THE THEOLOGY OF CRISIS

THE word *crisis* has two meanings: first, it signifies the climax of an illness; second, it denotes a turning-point in the progress of an enterprise or movement. If in these lectures we use the word in its second meaning, it yet retains the distinct color of the first. There is a striking difference between a European and an American of to-day. Europeans, especially since the war, see modern civilization as having come to a really critical stage. The famous book of Oswald Spengler, "The Decline of the West," has called to our attention in glaring headlines, what all of us have more or less felt, that the disintegrating tendencies of our modern world have led us to a decisive point where the issue can be only one of two things: either new life or death. Americans do not have the same keen sense of an impending crisis because of the economic prosperity and political security which they enjoy now more than ever before and which seem to justify a more optimistic view of the situation. But the lack of awareness of the crisis does not diminish its actuality. This may be understood best if we turn to that aspect of life and thought

in which we are most directly interested, the crisis of theology.

Protestant theology of our day is in a state of rapid dissolution. This is true of the United States even more than of the Continent or of England.* The clearest evidence of it is the decay of theological consciousness. Theologians of to-day are busy confirming the prejudice that theology is something unimportant and secondary, or even harmful to living religion. The modern slogan, "Not doctrine but life, not dogma but practice," is itself a doctrine, even a dogma, but it is not a Christian doctrine nor a Christian dogma. It is the dictum either of an ethical pragmatism or of mysticism. This attitude is characteristic of contemporary theology and religion.

But this is not the only symptom. In fact it merely points to the real cause of the disease. The substance of Christian theology, the content of Christian faith, is in a stage of complete decomposition. Christianity is either faith in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ or it is nothing. From this faith it derives its name, and has its peculiar content, its claim, its history. With

*It is perhaps *no longer* true to the same extent as it used to be on the European continent. Since the war, and it is only fair to say, since the new theological movement, a new theological consciousness is awakening. Central theological themes are taking the place of general discussions about "religion." The trend of present day German theology points clearly toward a "theology of the word of God," and this tendency is not at all limited to the so-called "Barthian School."

it Christianity stands or falls. In the course of the last two centuries—or, in the case of America, during the last three decades—a process of transubstantiation has gone on which has resulted in something utterly distinct from Christian faith and theology. The science which is taught in most of our leading theological schools under the name of Christian theology ought rather to be called the science of religion. For the subject matter is not the word of God, the revelation in Christ, but something totally different—religion, and perhaps revelation, in general. It seems very old-fashioned and unscientific to take theology in its original sense as the methodical study of the meaning of the word of God.

It is, however, necessary to view this particular phase of modern theology in its larger connection with historical development in general. The process of theology, of which this crisis constitutes the last stage, is part of that tremendous intellectual movement which took hold of Christian European society at the close of the Middle Ages. It began with the Renaissance, that is, with a turning away from the Christian understanding of life to ancient thinking and ideals; in time it created the mentality of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution; and, lastly, after certain tides of recession in German idealism and romanticism, it took the form of modern liberalism and eventuated in

the present crisis. It was and is an emancipation not only from the authority of the Roman Catholic Church but from all authority as such; therefore, from that concrete authority which is the basis of the whole Christian Church, the revelation in Jesus Christ. It substitutes a purely secular culture which is focused in man and based on reason. The religious convictions and values, which still play a great part in it, are not the necessary consequences of the self-communication of the transcendent and superrational God but the implications of a religion based upon the conception of the immanence of God.

This general intellectual movement and order of life is closely related to modern science, which is partly its cause, partly—and much more so—its effect. At first sight, indeed, it seems as if modern science were the principal factor in destroying the foundations of revealed theology and making necessary a restatement of religion in terms of immanence.

To begin with, the great scientific discoveries of Copernicus, Kepler, and Newton destroyed the world view which the Bible has in common with other ancient literatures. Then came the development of the historical sciences and, as one of its by-products, Biblical criticism. In its wake followed a collapse of faith in the unity and infallibility of the Bible, especially when it was shown that both form and content were conditioned by the circumstances in which the

authors wrote the several books. Finally, in the second half of the nineteenth century, natural science, this time in the form of biology, struck another crushing blow at the traditional view of the Scriptures. The theory of evolution, expanding the scope of time almost to eternity, as Copernicus had enlarged the reach of space to infinity, related man to the animal in a way hitherto undreamt of.

It is futile to minimize the additions which scientific study has made to the store of knowledge. True, the results are based on hypotheses; but who would deny that they have the weight of scientific proof in their favor, even if minor changes and further developments are still possible and probable? One thing, at any rate, must be evident: that we cannot return to that view of the world which is common to the Bible and to the rest of antiquity.

Shall we not, therefore, be forced to say that the issue between reason and revelation, between the modern doctrine of immanence and Biblical transcendence, is once for all decided in favor of reason? It certainly seems so. Christian theology in its turn tried to safeguard its own position by apologetics. It was a vain attempt. One bulwark after another fell; and with each new victory of modern science the progress of transubstantiation went on. The endeavor to harmonize Christian faith with the modern mind ended in a substitution of modern philosophy and

a religion of immanence for Christian faith; at first, indeed, with an evasive use of the traditional and accepted Christian terminology.

Gradually the Biblical dualistic concepts were replaced by a progressive, monistic, and optimistic idealism; the Biblical doctrines of salvation and revelation, by Stoic and Platonic ideas. The "Son of God," the Messiah, was changed into a religious genius and hero; *creatio ex nihilo* became *creatio continua*, i. e., evolution; salvation was identified with religious behavior and ethical betterment; judgment and forgiveness were resolved into subjective values of a sentimentally religious kind. In short, if ever the art of pouring new wine into old skins was successfully practised, modern theology may claim the prize.

Far be it from us to imply that it was done without a deep sense of historical responsibility. A pressing need seemed to demand it. It matters not what form of theology we have in mind. The charge applies equally to Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and Harnack. It is true of the more modern phases of which Otto and Deissmann are prominent leaders; and the religio-psychological school of Chicago or the historico-critical schools of Union and Harvard certainly are not excepted. However wide may be the differences between them, they are united in a common disagreement with the Biblical standpoint and the faith of the Reformers.

To Ernst Troeltsch, who may perhaps be called the greatest and most modern of modernists, belongs the credit of having discerned and shown the irreconcilable contradiction which modern theology has so long attempted to hide. He saw and confessed, boldly and without equivocation, the chasm which separates modern theology from the theology of the Reformers and of the Ancient Church.

But Troeltsch—or you may substitute for him any man of your own most recent leaders in the field of theology—introduces also the final stage in this development. From 1700 A. D. to 1900 A. D. Christian theology changes its distinctively Christian bearings and drifts with an idealistic immanence-faith into theological liberalism. The year 1900 marks the approximate date when it began to sink into a sea of relativistic skepticism. If once man is the measure of all things, no rational idea, however absolute it purports to be, can ward off the final dissolution of theology. To-day doubt assails not only Christianity; no, every world view is attacked, not merely the fundamentally Christian, ethical, and historical viewpoint; but all ethics, every norm, every absolute, is endangered. Troeltsch himself, who began his theological career as a Ritschlian—as most of us did—changed gradually from a theologian to a leader in religious philosophy and sociology, and consummated his work as a representative and ad-

vocate of an almost boundless historical relativism.

England and America have had the same experience, but with this difference, that in these lands the development has taken a peculiar Anglo-Saxon form. The idealistic-liberal world-view has been progressively undermined by a naturalistic positivism and pragmatism. The schools of radical psychology of religion offer incontrovertible evidence that all absolute values and all objective content of faith have been renounced. Here also theology has merely followed the general intellectual trend of the day. The modern man no longer believes in an absolute, in whatever form it may be offered, whether that of Christian faith, of idealism, or of mysticism. If he believes in anything it is in absolute uncertainty.

These theological developments testify also to the crisis of modern culture in general. It is the crisis which Spengler has condensed into his pessimistic vision of the decline of the West. It amounts to the decay of all spiritual substance. An age which has lost its faith in an absolute has lost everything. It must perish; it has no vitality left to pass the crisis; its end can only be—the end.

But beside this modern theology, in its various forms of dissolution, we cannot fail to note an imposing mediæval form of orthodoxy. In America it is known as Fundamentalism. Only

a very superficial psychology is satisfied to explain this phenomenon by saying *vis inertiae*. Among the leaders of this movement, both in America and in Europe, there are so many scholarly and devout men that it is sheer snap-judgment to explain their theology as due to mere traditionalism or conservatism. In this way, neither the essence of their movement nor the mental forces behind it are truly valued. These men, notwithstanding their one-sidedness and certain traits of close-mindedness, leave the impression that they stand for a great dynamic truth, by which they live and which they must not lose if they are not to lose their best.

A first glance at fundamentalism shows its strength to consist in a negative: its criticism of modernism from the standpoint of Christian faith. The modernist may lightly accuse his fundamentalist opponent of not having the scientific mind. But a fundamentalist, possessed of a reasonably correct knowledge of Christianity, will have little difficulty in proving that the modernist teaches, under the label of Christianity, a religion which has nothing in common with Christianity except a few words, and that these words cover concepts which are irreconcilable with the content of Christian faith. Indeed, in a discussion with his antagonist, the fundamentalist may count on help from the radical left wing of the modernists. For here also the real state of affairs is appreciated—as I

have shown in the case of Troeltsch. The left wing recognize that they are not defending, or contending for, a new interpretation of Christianity. Fundamentalists and extreme modernists are agreed that the real issue at stake is the complete surrender of genuine Christianity.

It is quite true that not a new interpretation or modification, but rather a complete change, of the essence of faith is involved. There is a wide difference between speaking of religion in general and of the word of God and revelation; of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, coming forth from eternity, the Saviour and Redeemer, and of the outstanding teacher of a rational ethical idea and a pattern of a religious life; of sin in the New Testament meaning of the term, as disobedience against God and as corruption from which no particle of historical life is exempt, and of sin as the lowest stage in the ascent to perfection; of creation by divine act as the origin of all being and of the evolution of an immanent substance in which the potency of all this is latent. There is a wide difference also between the assertions that religion constitutes the highest value of life and that man is justified by faith alone. They are directly contradictory. For a time modern theology sought to evade the dilemma of the terms—modern or Christian—by setting up the so-called synoptic Gospel against the gospel of Paul and John. Critical investigation, however, has cut off this line

of retreat. It has been clearly shown that the liberal portraits of Jesus are not true to the facts in the sources. In painting them the optimistic, idealistic man of the nineteenth century merely reproduced his own likeness, presumably out of the Gospels, but only after he had put himself into them. The re-discovery of Biblical eschatology and of Jesus' overpowering Messiah-consciousness, and, above all, the new appreciation of the close relation between the faith of Paul and that of the first churches, proves that this so-called contrast is of minor importance. Truly, when the fundamentalists say that the modernists no longer hold the Christian faith, they are not far from telling the truth.

But a well-versed fundamentalist is in a position to add a positive to his negative thesis. He can show *what* this modernism, which has forsaken the Biblical faith, really is. Modernism is by no means a newcomer in the realm of theology; it is even older than Christianity itself. It attempts to cast old ideas into new forms. In so far as modernism has truly religious values, that is, has the consciousness of an Absolute, an Eternal, a Divine, it is essentially nothing more nor less than a repristination of later Platonism, either taking its form from the more ethically oriented Stoicism or from the Neoplatonic mysticism. In its choice between a religious philosophical idealism and the Christian faith, modern theology, whether it is

Schleiermacher's, Otto's, Ritschl's, Hermann's, or Harnack's, has cast its lot with idealism against faith. Let me make this clear in only one aspect; but in doing so I shall strike at the very heart of idealism.

Stoic and Neoplatonic idealism, in spite of the well-known differences between them, are agreed in this, that man in the depth of his being is divine; divine in the sense that the consciousness of the best and highest in human nature constitutes also the consciousness of the eternally Divine. The nurture of this highest in us frees us from the disharmony and slavery which cling, as so-called sin, to the finite. Whether this deliverance or redemption is accomplished by energizing the will, or by submerging self after the manner of the mystics, cannot be considered a vital distinction in the face of their common disagreement with the Christian faith. Let me call their point of view the idea of continuity.

Over against it stands the thought of discontinuity which is basic to every primary doctrine of Christianity. A line of distinction is clearly drawn between God and the world by the concept of creation *ex nihilo*. This dualism is absolutely contradictory to modern monism. This line of separation between God and the world, which naturally applies to man also, stands out more boldly in the concept of sin, if it is understood in the terrific meaning which it has in the Christian dogma of "the fall" and "original sin." There sin is asserted to be a radical severance of

the relation between God and man. It implies a vehement denial of a divine depth or height in man where communion with God may be effected or man may in some way find salvation. Salvation in this view, as is clearly evident, has a wholly different meaning. It is not man's movement toward God but God's movement toward man. It is this movement of God toward man which the Bible calls revelation, reconciliation, redemption, salvation. Salvation *here* is the entrance into history of something absolutely new; yea, of God himself. *There* there is an activation of a divine *a priori* in the human mind.

In the light of this contrast between idealism and the Biblical testimony, modernism differs less from the religious mysticism of the Orient than it differs from the faith of the Bible and the Church. In fact, modern idealism shows a closer relation to the mysticism of the Vedanta than to the apostle Paul.

Thus fundamentalist criticism has justified its thesis, negatively and positively, that modernism can no longer be called Christianity.

But what have we profited? The dilemma is not removed but intensified. We shall have to be either scientific or Christian; or, stating it in terms of basic motives, we shall have either a religion of self-redemption which does not satisfy the conscience or a religion of a transcendent redemption which contradicts the demands made by the scientific mind.

But this dilemma between science and Chris-

tianity can be shown to be only apparent and not real. Undoubtedly you will have noted that, twice in my discussion, I assumed a wrong equation. Christianity, in the sense of the Bible, was taken to be identical with orthodoxy; and liberalism was supposed to be identical with science in the sense of critical search for truth. It behooves us now to show that these identifications are wide of the mark. Neither is the orthodox or fundamentalist form of theology the same as Christian faith nor is liberal Christianity truly scientific. Fundamentalism conflicts with science exactly because, and in so far as, it is not truly Christian; and liberal criticism is not truly Christian because, and in so far as, it is not truly critical. A third thesis may be added with propriety, namely, that only a Christian can be truly critical, and only he who is truly critical can be a Christian. The principles of true Christianity and of true criticism are identical. Fundamentalism and orthodoxy in general are a petrification of Christianity; and modernism and all doctrines of immanence are its dissolution.

Since my next lectures are devoted to a proof of this thesis, I shall now, only in a precursory way, sketch their contents.

Let me begin with modernism. Modern theology, like all modern thinking, is controlled by a non-critical faith in reason. By reason I mean not merely the intellect but all the facul-

ties of man as such. The man who has this non-critical faith in reason will accept as valid only what he is able to verify. Man is the measure of all things. To put it in a more specific form, only such predicates are considered valid as fit into a verifiable system of truth. The rational man assumes a closed universe, as it were, an unbroken *continuum* of truth, a circle of verities which are the object both of mathematical science and of theological inquiry.* So man makes himself the judge of all truth; and, in so doing, he shows himself to be uncritical. For soundly critical reasoning would show this *continuum* of knowledge to be not only imperfectible but also impossible. Such reasoning would expose sharp contradictions and irreconcilable antinomies. I mention only those of the practical and of the theoretical reason. They point to the inevitable conclusion that final decisive truth is not to be found in the same place or in the same way as rational knowledge. Soundly critical reasoning will not answer but only raise the question whether or not the last cause, which we apprehend only vaguely as God, can manifest itself

*This is what might be called the monism of science, the widespread understanding that science is one and the same whatever its subject matter may be. Against this non-critical monism of science we emphasize that every science is thoroughly dependent on its subject matter. Since Rickert has shown the fundamental difference between all sciences of nature and all sciences of mind (*Geisteswissenschaften*), we are prepared for the view that theology, which deals not with "some thing" but with the ground of all things, cannot be ranked with the sciences in general.

in a way that is above reach of verifiable thought; whether or not revelation, i. e., an historical self-manifestation of God such as the Christian faith asserts, is possible.

Not true science, but the monism of reason alone, opposes faith in the Christian revelation; not the actual results of scientific research, but the axiom of the rationalists that all knowledge is obtained through processes of human reasoning rejects the possibility of Christian revelation. Controlled by this rationalism the modern mind does not acknowledge divine revelation in the Biblical sense but only in the sense of a general or natural revelation, recognizing only the divine which is immanent in the human mind or in nature in general. This sort of dogmatism reveals the uncritical character of rationalism.

In the sphere of practical reason the lack of critical judgment becomes even more evident; for here the decision is made. The modern man relishes faith in man's goodness. He has appropriated to himself Rousseau's words, the Stoic idea: "Man is good." Therefore he believes in an unbroken development till the summit of goodness is reached. He worships before optimistic evolutionism in so far as he is not an avowed skeptic. Therefore he refuses to accept the Christian faith. For Christian faith is the ultimate refuge only for those who are no longer blind to the illusory character of man's goodness. Faith knows that reconciliation and re-

demption must come from outside of man. It is an illusion to hope for it from within man. Liberalism, on the other hand, since the days of the Stoics, of Pelagius, of Erasmus, of the Enlightenment, has ever affirmed that the heart of man is not evil. Evil merely clings to man's heart, as the barnacles to the ship's hull. It believes, therefore, that a movement from man toward the divine is possible; although it be conceived of as mediated by God, such a movement makes redemption unnecessary. The modern man will not be told that he is a sinner; and therefore he is slow to examine and condemn himself. But in reality he *is* a sinner. His optimistic idealism is his illusion. The man who knows himself to be a sinner, a sinner in the New Testament meaning of the word, ceases to be a mystic; and he will also, perhaps, bid a sad, but definite, adieu to an idealistic ethic.

The moment when he comes to a knowledge of his real self, he will be prepared to understand the truth of the Gospel, the real Gospel, not merely a so-called synoptic Gospel. All forms of mysticism and idealism and all the beliefs of modern theology rest upon blindness to the fact of sin. The great theologians of this type, Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and their more modern followers, have always tried to minimize the fact of "evil." Every philosophy of immanence will be wrecked when it strikes the solid rock of sin and guilt.

Our criticism of fundamentalism, or orthodoxy, is of another kind. This type of thought has not surrendered the substance of Christianity after the manner of liberalism. Orthodoxy errs in its insistence on the rigidity and finality of its form, which, because of its lack of critical insight, it assumes to be essential to its existence. The spirit and attitude of orthodoxy appear in the central concept of theology, that of revelation. The fact cannot be successfully denied that the Christian Church stands or falls with her confession: God manifest in the flesh; God himself, no mere idea of God. But orthodoxy has never really taken seriously the fact of the incarnation. The revelation of God can never be a true revelation without being, at the same time, a disguise, a κένωσις. "God incarnate" means that the Mediator, when he appeared in history, was true man. The Son of God *incognito* walked among men. Faith only can pierce the veil. "Flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee." Orthodoxy has always tried to prove by historical arguments that Jesus was the God-man. It is an attempt to allay the suspicion of the skeptic that he may have been a mere man. This attempt at historical proof has brought orthodoxy into conflict with science.

What we have said with regard to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, is true also with regard to the Scriptures. The Christian Church can never afford to forsake its base: the Scrip-

tures—and the Scriptures alone are God's word. What I said of God incarnate is true of the revelation in the Bible; to be a real revelation it must be veiled. The word of God in the Scriptures is as little to be identified with the words of the Scriptures, as the Christ according to the flesh is to be identified with the Christ according to the spirit. The words of the Scriptures are human; that is, God makes use of human and, therefore, frail and fallible words of men who are liable to err. But men and their words are the means through which God speaks to men and in men. Only through a serious misunderstanding will genuine faith find satisfaction in the theory of verbal inspiration of the Bible. In fact, this misrepresents what true faith conceives the Bible to be. He who identifies the letters and words of the Scriptures with the word of God has never truly understood the word of God; he does not know what constitutes revelation. A better witness than Martin Luther we can scarcely call up. No man ever lived who knew better than he, what the Bible is to the Christian. And Martin Luther, with full appreciation of what he was saying, placed side by side these two statements: "The Scriptures alone are God's word"; and "they are the cradle in which Christ is laid." Need it be mentioned that he busied himself with Biblical criticism? If one were to say that Biblical criticism is *possible* in spite of faith in the Bible, one would

lay oneself open to the charge of prevarication. He who would know what constitutes the word of God in the Bible, *must* devote himself to Biblical criticism. And, let it be understood, to searching, fearless, radical criticism. For it is really the will of God that we shall hear *his* word and not mistake ancient cosmology and Israelitish chronology for the word of God. It must not be said that in this manner reason again makes itself master of the Bible. Reason must be brought to the point where it will find its master; when, as Luther puts it, reason is made a prisoner of the word of God.

But here one must take good heed lest one permit an erroneous and uncritical theory of revelation to lead one into an uncritical and erroneous practice. The modern man finds the orthodox churchman, on account of the audacity of his claim, to be obnoxious, and justly so. He *is* it, he *has* it, he *knows* it; he is on the right side and the whole world is on the wrong side. With his erroneous premises he tries to protect the revelation in the Bible against doubt, and the Church and the Christian against the world. He has not yet learned that the true Christian does not really exist, for while he is a Christian he is and remains always a sinner, as the others who are not Christians; that he and they are equally responsible for the sins of the world, especially for its social injustice. The Christian taken by himself is still a part of the

world. He is not actually a saint or a righteous man; he is a sinner as really as the criminal who is sentenced to the penitentiary. He is a saint only because, and in so far as, Christ covers and hides him and claims him for Himself. The error of Methodism in its view of conversion has had more vitiating influence upon the orthodox thinking of to-day than is generally recognized and admitted. As if conversion were the process by which a sinful man is actually transformed into a Christian man! Only by a deplorable misunderstanding will one find in Romans VII and VIII two different stages of the Christian life. A mistake like this shows the danger of error to which the Church and theology are exposed by an uncritical interpretation of the Bible. In this way the Church becomes pharisaical, and its message to the world disfigured and encumbered.

Modernism and fundamentalism are born of the same mother, that is, of the fear of sound critical thinking. But, let me add, this fear belongs to all of us. It is essentially a part of the "old man"; nay, it is his very essence. It is the pride of the man who will not stand in the judgment of God, who will not concede that he is, really and wholly, a sinner, whose only salvation is the grace of God. Modernism digs itself in, before this unheard-of demand for confession of sin, behind an easy-going belief in the goodness of man and humanity; and funda-

mentalism finds safety behind its orthodoxy and its ecclesiasticism. We try one way and then the other; the important thing is that we discover both to be wrong. Faith must face this fact squarely and without evasion and know it to be true. Then, and then only, will we see the benefits that come out of the crisis of theology; and our fatal illness will turn into convalescence, into life itself.

## II

## THE QUEST OF TRUTH: REVELATION

IF you should ask a man of average education what he understands by truth, his answer would be something like this: "Truth is a series of statements which correspond with facts and are capable of proof." He thinks of truth in terms of science; he is capable only of the "superficial" thinking of men in daily life who are concerned with the *superficies* or visible and tangible side of things. Although it cannot be denied that science has something to do with truth, it can by no means be accepted as the ultimate measure of truth. This accounts for the fact that our time, which has made unparalleled progress in scientific knowledge, is perhaps farther away from truth than any previous age. The kind of truth which is to be found in the realm, and by the means, of science is relatively unimportant; for it deals with the external aspect of things. The scientific conception of truth is that of the technician, that is, of the man who is concerned with the exterior part of reality and is intent upon changing it in the interest of human aggrandizement. The technician registers facts and forces rather than discerns truth. Even the sci-

ences that investigate the essence of things in the most thoroughgoing way, such as theoretical physics, do nothing more than produce an accurate time-table indicating where and when future events will take place. Even the most outstanding scientific discoveries, such as those of Copernicus or Darwin, barely penetrate the surface of man's being. It is through misunderstanding of their real importance that scientific questions arouse any depth of interest. Taken by themselves they have not the "temperature" of truth. In other words, scientific truths are relative; they join units to units, things to things. They never touch the heart of things.

Another realm of truth lies beyond immediate experience and must be approached in a different way from that of science. Truths of this kind must be reached by finding the unifying principles of the facts of science and daily experience by a process of deduction or induction. This is the purpose of metaphysics. Metaphysics does not grow out of an effort to meet practical needs or to satisfy the curiosity of men in pursuit of their daily task or to answer the problems of the scientist. It moves on a higher plane. Metaphysics is an attempt to gain an integral view of the totality of existence, i. e., of the universe. It is akin to scientific investigation, however, in doing its work in a cool atmosphere of objectivity and serenity. Man, in both instances, is a spectator who views the world from

afar. Truth, therefore, to the metaphysician is an æsthetic object, a *Weltanschauung*. Aristotle, the model and ideal of all metaphysicians, represents this conception of truth and this attitude toward life. Very significantly he calls it *βίος θεωρετικός*, "world-spectatorship." Even if the question of God, soul, and ultimate ends is touched upon, as is done by Aristotle and by Leibnitz, the basic idea is that of harmony; the point of view remains the æsthetic one. It is an æsthetic theology, a view of God taken from a sublime height without passion; and, what may prove to be the same thing, without personal decision. As theory, it is a wonderful spectacle, a real *θέατρον*. I think the tendency of our age is in this direction.*

There is a third way of seeking truth; when one no longer seeks, with philistine concern, for practical values; when it is not sought with cool scientific objectivity or with a serene æsthetic outlook upon the world, but with the passion of a drowning man, who desperately cries for help. It is the quest of a man who passionately feels the import of the question: "What is truth? I must know or I shall die." That is the real search for truth. Men bent upon that quest may have the spirit of objectivity which true science demands. They are not too narrow-minded or

*The finest example of this modern metaphysical outlook and its æsthetic character is Whitehead's philosophy. Whitehead is one of the few metaphysicians who acknowledge the æsthetic foundation of their conception of the world totality.

too restless to permit their minds to be a mirror of the universe. Indeed, their quest is normal not only to certain men but to man as such: it is not an evidence of their weakness but of that quality which distinguishes them from the mere animal man. This quest of truth is not a search for something immediately useful; not even the desire to know all things in their relations is the compelling motive. Men of this sort are in search of the meaning of existence itself. They are no longer mere spectators, for they know that their very existence is at stake. Man himself is in question. *Tua res agitur.* When you are discussing the origin of the human race, you are not speaking of man in his entirety but only of animal man, of the man-thing, the man-shell, not of man as distinctively human. But in the third way of inquiry one is concerned about manhood in man, about that which makes of the *homo sapiens* a *humanus.* One seeks to know his whence and where, his what and why, of which he is so uncertain that he is driven to despair. The religious question is now supreme, the question pertaining to the relationship between God and man, to the whence and whither of existence. The urgency and decisiveness of this question are inseparable from its object; they are correlative to it, so that you may say: "If you do not *so* seek, namely, personally and passionately, you do not seek at all." Your heart will be aflame with the question only when you are dealing with the fiery centre, and not the circumference,

of existence. Here is an unalterable co-ordination: to find the centre of existence, the centre of your own being has to be active; with the periphery of your being you can find only the surface of reality.

Can we or can we not know God? This question is not one among many others; because it is not concerned with a truth among other truths. It is the question out of which all other questions originate, from which all values derive their worth, all meanings their content. It is the supreme question, because it aims at the heart of all existence, at the meaning and destiny of all life. It is the primary question even for those who are not aware of it, because it also includes their destiny, and the destiny of all science and culture, which perhaps seems more important to them. For all culture, including science, has grown and still grows out of the faith that human existence has a meaning. And this belief is an outgrowth of religion.

Culture may for a season liberate or emancipate itself from religion. But, if it does, its dissolution has begun.

It is not mere chance that we cannot ask the question about God, the question whether or not we can know him, without passion and with a cool resolve to seek only that which is objective. We cannot and must not ask, save with all the earnestness our hearts are capable of: "Can I know God?"

Two answers seem to be possible. One affirms

that we can know Him on the ground of divine immanence; the other asserts it on the ground of divine transcendence.* The first answer assumes, on the strength of inward and outward experience, a divine essence in the world. I should call this the way of interpretation. The second answer rests its affirmation on a self-manifestation of God, penetrating and contradicting the world and human experience. I should call this the way of revelation.

In considering the first of these answers, a vital question seems to present itself: "Does the experience of a divine essence in the world originate outside of us or within us?" Now this question has no basis in reality: there is no real difference here. Even the mythological nature-religions of paganism are not actually an interpretation of an external experience of nature. They are rather a projection of an inner experience into the world. What the most modern theology, especially in America, calls *experiencing* God, is in fact an *interpretation* of the world, based on inner spiritual experiences; or, to state it more definitely, based on inward spiritual conditions. It is an interpretation of the universe

*When here and in the following lectures we distinguish between the "transcendent" God of the Bible and the God-idea of the "religion of immanence," it is important to note that we are treating of an epistemological but not a cosmological transcendence. We hold, i. e., that God cannot be known by his active presence in the world. His presence in nature and history is not denied, but it is regarded as hidden, so that what God is, is not revealed.

from the point of view of a self-interpreting mind. In fact this so-called realism and idealism, as well as mystical religion, are intrinsically the same thing. They are a religion of immanence. Man finds God in the depths of nature, be it human or sub-human nature; in the depth of his soul. God is the essence or substance of the empirical world; he is not other-than-the-world, other-than-I.

Man finds God in existing things. He is merely another name for the essence of existence. A religion based on such a conception of God is monistic and optimistic. It asserts an unbroken unity and continuity of God and the natural existence of man. God and world-experience are not contradictory; nor are the experience of the world and the Ego different from God. There is a way of passing from one to the other. The world in its being is divine and the essence of the Ego is God-like. If God is to be known, as one of your theological leaders puts it, by the "behavior of the universe," he cannot possibly be known as one who is different from, or even in contradiction to, the nature of the world.

Against this doctrine of immanence grave philosophical doubts may be urged. But we pass them by and consider still graver religious objections.

1. A God who is identical with the depths of the world or the soul is not really God. He

is neither the sovereign of the world nor of man. He is too close to both of them to be really their Lord. Indeed, he is merely another aspect, the hidden portion, as it were, of the world and of myself. Such a religion, in its final analysis, is nothing but ancient paganism, a deification of the world and self.

2. Such a God is not really personal. What is not personal cannot be my superior but must be my inferior. For the personal is above the impersonal. A God whom I shall have to know through an interpretation of the world or of myself is less than I am because I give utterance to him who himself is dumb, as it were. He becomes a personality only through me.

3. This religion of immanence is not really based upon faith. Faith is an answer to a call, a response to a challenge. An immanent God, however, neither calls nor challenges me. He does not demand a decision. In fact a decision is not even possible. The religion of immanence excludes decision because the Divine is supposed to be identical with the deepest self of man. Man is not asked to choose one or another alternative, for man is already in God and God in him. Man is on the safe side before he makes a decision.

4. But, for this very reason, man never becomes a real personality. For decision is the essence of personality. Only when man comes to a crisis and is compelled to choose between life

and death does he become a personality. At the very moment when God challenges him to make his decision man is given personality. Faith and personality are identical. Apart from faith, which constitutes man's decision, personality is not to be found. Man becomes personal when his own will is broken into by the will of the Lord.

An impersonal God and an impersonal man are the necessary and inevitable consequences of a religion of immanence. A personal God and a personal faith are not possible when our knowledge of God is the result of an interpretation of the world and the Ego. Personal faith and knowledge of a personal God who is Lord of the world can be gained only when God reveals himself personally. The mysterious God, whom the world neither knows nor shows, whom I do not know and whom the inner man does not reveal, must reveal his mystery to the world—must tell his own name—by "piercing" into the world. He must assert himself over against the world as a being who is not-world, not-ego; who reveals his true name, the secret of his unknown will which is opposed to the world, contrary to our experience and, above all, to the thoughts and intents of our own heart. He is the God of whom it has been said: "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Indeed, we are in a position to

criticise the conception of revelation as held by adherents of the religion of immanence, only because and in so far as we know the revelation in Christ. We recognize the illusiveness of every religion of immanence and its doctrine of revelation because we know, through the revelation of Jesus Christ, the reality of God, the reality of man, and the reality of decision. Revelation accordingly means that God no longer speaks *out of* us, but *to* us; we do not know him as being *in* the world, and therefore we do not know him *through* the world, but we know him as the One who comes *into* the world. For he himself is an other than the world, an other than the content of the soul. He is the *Other One*, the mysterious and unknowable One, who has his own proper name and whom we do not know because he is *person*. Personality is a secret; a mystery is hidden in it. Knowledge of a person is possible only through revelation, and he reveals himself through his word. Through the word the mystery of the person is communicated. So God reveals himself in the word because he is spirit, the only true personal spirit.

For this reason revelation and faith must be interpreted and understood in a way different from that by which we obtain knowledge of existing things. The will of God is not identical with that which happens; if it were, God would be identical with fate. He would be so bound as to be in complete bondage to the world. Such a

"revelation" would be the discovery of something already existing; it would mean either the unending permanence of the contradictions in the world or the negation of them as mere illusions. Reality, as it now exists, is not only not divine; on the contrary, its centre, that part of it which we really know, our will, is anti-divine. God, therefore, can reveal himself only as One who is in contradiction to the present world and breaks through its immanent order or law. God's will is antagonistic to the course of the world, but through revelation he declares his purpose to overcome the antagonism. The religion of immanence must either optimistically deny or minimize it; otherwise it is forced to acknowledge it as necessary to God's world; and so religion becomes wholly pessimistic and would better give up the name of God. The self-revelation of God means that he reveals himself in spite of and in contradiction to a world which is antagonistic to him. His revelation, therefore, means that his will becomes known as the will which the world neither has nor knows, and that his truth, which is not immanent in the world, is brought into it. He reveals himself as the unheard-of, unrecognized, mysterious person, who cannot be discovered anywhere in the world. His revelation is a communication, through his personal word, of what no one knows and no one has. Through his word God reveals his personality. We our-

selves become persons when, through his revelation, he requires us to make a decision between his will and ours. This choice is the essence of faith.

But one more differentiation needs to be made. What is the meaning of "the personal Word"? We may be thinking of the word of the prophets, and not without some justification. But the word of the prophets is not in itself the Word of God; it is merely a word concerning the Word of God. It is not the perfect divine self-manifestation, because it is not itself wholly personal. God's personal word exists and is heard only when he who speaks and what he speaks are one; when the person of the speaker and the authority of his word are inseparable. It must be a word that does not need a prophet as an instrument, but that is present in a person, that is, *in persona*. A person then, in space and time, is himself the Word. The Word of God, because it is a personal word, is present as a person. This is what the Christian calls revelation; "the Word was made flesh and we have seen his glory."

Let me further explain what is *not* meant. Revelation is not a miraculous theophany. Paganism knows theophanies, that is, direct appearances of the Deity. The pagan does not know what spirit is. Therefore he does not know that spirit-communication itself is indirect. He wants to see; not to hear. His relation to the Deity is

an æsthetic one; not the word, but the sight, gives him his god. It is not direct but indirect communication that constitutes true revelation; and indirect communication is communication through the word. Thus the historical appearance of the human personality of Jesus is not, as such, revelation; it is revelation only in so far as in this historical, human personality the eternal Son of God is recognized. The *incognito* of his historical appearance can be pierced only by the eye of faith. The Christ according to the spirit who must be discerned in the Christ according to the flesh, the eternal Son of God who must be seen by faith as the mystery of the man Jesus, is the incarnate Word of God.

Again, Jesus is not meant to be the teacher, the religious genius, the champion and "revealer" of the highest moral code, and the example of the purest religious and ethical life. A teacher, as Socrates shows, teaches only what is latent in the student. He says nothing essentially new and, therefore, cannot be the bearer of true salvation. Even the loftiest example of religious morality does not help us. He may lead us on a step but he never can lead us out of godlessness. The teacher and the example belong to us, and not to God. Jesus as the most perfect embodiment of the highest religious idea—as modern theology regards him—is not revealer and therefore not Saviour. For as such he does not come *to* the world; he is *of* the world, a product

of its immanent possibilities. This conception of Jesus merely adds another to the many religious possibilities. How Jesus found God, how he prayed, how he lived, is not divine revelation for us; then he would be merely a religious man who differs from others because he represents a higher degree of religion. The so-called historical Jesus is not as such the Christ; and that which the historian sees in him is not the saving revelation of God. We mean by revelation what the New Testament and the Church expressed in the doctrine of the incarnation of the eternal Word of God. Any doctrine of Jesus that says less than this, that the Word of God became man, falls below the true fact of revelation. It is, in the final analysis, an aspect of the religion of immanence.

If Jesus is merely a teacher, example, genius, then it does not matter whether he lived or not, whether the world remembers or forgets him. Then we get no further with Jesus than without him. Christian faith has nothing in common with such a religion of immanence. It may claim Jesus for itself; but in reality it is only another form of the religion of the Stoics, who were much more successful than the New Testament in coining the slogans which are said to be characteristic of the Gospel; that is, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Christian faith, faith in contradistinction to the religion of immanence, must abide by the assertion:

"Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, God become man." Acknowledgment of the living Word of God constitutes the Christian faith.

You may answer: "But are you sure you are right? Granted that this alone would constitute real revelation and granted that this conception of revelation is the foundation of Christian faith, is this conception and faith true?" We have come to the place where innumerable questions are put to us. Before I begin answering some of the most important ones in the short time available, let me say that the storm of opposition against the affirmation of the incarnation, that is, of real revelation, is not at all unexpected; in fact it is altogether in order. For the assertion of such revelation does more than prick the puffed-up pride of reason. But let me observe that all these questions are asked by outsiders; we are all, at the start, outsiders, spectators. But let me assure you that an outsider's question can never be answered unless he ceases to be an outsider. If God speaks to me, I can hear him only by letting him speak to me. Every theoretical understanding is in its very inception a misunderstanding. The majority of the most difficult questions which Christian theology must deal with arise from an attempt to comprehend and appreciate its message from the standpoint of the spectator. But it can be demonstrated *a priori* that from this point of view the Christian message will be found foolish and

absurd from the very start. Its absurdity, however, is not to be sought in the message itself; but rather in the fact that a word, which ought to be heard and appreciated as a challenge to us, is accepted theoretically, that is, from the spectator's standpoint. With these introductory remarks, let us now take up some of the questions that must be in your mind.

1. "How can you prove that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the incarnate Word?" Here you have the question of the spectator *par excellence*. Let me in turn ask you this question: "Would a revelation which is capable of proof still be a revelation?" In proving an assertion we link it up with higher relations. What kind of a revelation would it be that is subordinate to a superior principle? Say, to reason? What manner of God is he who can be proved? Revelation means that what is said here is truth recognized as being true only by him who permits it to be told to him. It is truth carrying its trustworthiness within itself, just as all rational truth carries its trustworthiness in itself. It is, as Calvin expresses it, *autopistic*. Looking at it from the human angle, what manner of faith is the faith that must be propped up by proof? It would be something like a suitor who, on the point of asking the lady of his choice for her heart and hand, were to employ a detective to spy out her character. Faith is the venture by which one trusts the truth of a word, not because one is courageous

and tries it out for once, but because one cannot do otherwise under the constraint of the word.

2. "Every religion basing itself on revelation says the same thing. The claim of Christianity to be the revealed religion is not unique; but it contradicts every other religion." This is not a new objection, but its falsity can be demonstrated. No religion knows the concept of revelation as Christianity holds it. In all other religious revelation relates itself to singulars and is therefore an aggregate of many single revelations which may go on to the end of time. No religion ever dared to affirm seriously that God became man. In the mythological theophanies similar assertions are seemingly made. But they are events which are repeated almost at will and their historical character is as uncertain as their content is dubious. The one word of our confession of faith—crucified under Pontius Pilate—together with the apostle's ἐφάπαξ, "once for all"—fixes the fundamental difference between Christianity's claim of revelation and the claims made by other religions. Revelation, in the sense of the Christian faith, differs wholly from revelation in the meaning of other religions by reason of its "onceness." Christianity takes the concept revelation with absolute seriousness, while the other religions to a larger or smaller degree play with it mythologically.

3. "Christian faith in revelation contradicts

modern science; for it presupposes a miracle." Surely it does; not only *a* miracle but *the* absolute miracle. The time has passed when science may speak with authority on the possibility or impossibility of miracles. Let me point out to you in a few words what needs to be said here. The thought of a continuous causality which dominated the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has been discarded in our day. Those who know that many, but by no means all, phenomena can be explained by the law of causality have long refused to consider it universal. Within the circle of what is explicable by causality, if that holds good, there are smaller circles which certainly defy explanation under the causal law, as, for example, the circle of the organic, of consciousness, of human freedom. The smallest of these circles is the last named. Man alone belongs to it. Let me put it positively. Let it be granted that the physical is not miraculous; then the organic is the least, and the human the greatest, miracle within the world known to us. In acknowledging the miracle of freedom or of the human mind, the discussion between science and faith ends, or becomes a discussion between reason and faith. But we shall consider the latter discussion later. When an understanding of the nature of spirit has undermined the dogma of causality, the attack on the miracle of revelation from the quarter of the principle of causality will no longer be successfully sustained.

4. "The assertion of the deity of Jesus Christ contradicts the results of critical historical research." We have before us a question partly historical and partly dogmatical. Lest we open the door to misunderstandings let me say that I myself am an adherent of a rather radical school of Biblical criticism, which, for example, does not accept the Gospel of John as an historical source and which finds legends in many parts of the synoptic gospels. But the most radical criticism will never succeed in proving that Jesus did not consider himself to be the Messiah, i. e., that he did not make a claim for himself which goes far beyond his humanity. Furthermore, no historical criticism can deny, with any reasonable hope of success, that the first church already revered Jesus as the risen Lord. Be that, however, as it may; the contenders against the deity of Jesus as well as its defenders constantly overlook the fact that the revelation of God means that God became really man, that is, he veiled himself so completely that faith only can recognize in the man Jesus the Son of God. This the word of the Lord himself clearly indicates, when he says: "Verily, flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee."

The question then is not to be decided by history. It is a question of faith. It ought not to read: "Was Jesus such an one as the historians say or as the believers assert?" It ought to read: "This Jesus, whom the historians try to portray

with some degree of accuracy, is he the Christ or is he not?" We accept the historians' portraits of him, well knowing that a generally accepted portrait does not yet exist. But we claim that the historian can see only what St. Paul calls "Christ according to the flesh," the human *incognito* of the Christ. The real Christ is not visible to the historian's eye. To see the revelation of God in Christ is a gracious privilege of faith, of the believer and not of the historian; or metaphysically speaking, the organ with which Christ is apprehended is not the historian's scientific eye but the spiritual eye of the believer. Historical criticism has done us a valuable service by forcing us to take the manhood of the Son of God more seriously than the Church generally has done before.

But all these questions are really only of secondary importance. We have not yet examined the real ground of the reason's opposition to the message of the Gospel. The reason refuses to acknowledge that there can be anything over which it has not the right of judgment; or, to use once more our metaphor of the circles, man will not believe that his own circle is not the final circle, that within this circle there is a point which one man alone occupies—and humanity cannot occupy—because that man is not merely man but also God. If the human circle is final and highest, then indeed our reason, which is the essence of our humanity, must be

the court of last appeal. Then man is the measure of all things. Then the depths of man contain the divine and the consciousness of his spirituality constitutes revelation. Here lies the real cause of man's antagonism to faith. It means no more nor less than that we refuse to abdicate the throne of our autonomy. We do not believe revelation because we will not be humbled. We will not believe that the final truth is not *in* us and that it must come *to* us in a singular, external event in history. The last redoubt of the enemy of faith is not science; many of the most renowned men of science have kept the faith; nor is it historical research; many critics have not lost it. Nor is it a conscientious critical inquiry whether or not the superrational may be merely an irrational; many of the clearest thinkers have given themselves to such criticism and still they believe. The enmity does not come from reason as such; but it is born from our claim that reason is the measure of all truth. The source of antagonism against faith is the *pride* of reason.

This pride, this claim of reason to be the court of last appeal, the supreme judge of truth, constitutes sin; it is the heart of sin. By this claim we assert our will to be like God and we refuse to acknowledge the majesty and sovereignty of God. A God who is compassed by reason cannot be God, the Lord. Such a God might be the God of Plato. Reason may find

room within God, but never God within reason. Our reason is unfortunately not pure reason. If it were, it would willingly devote itself to the revelation of God. But none of us may say this of himself. We all carry within our reason the claim that we permit nothing to be taken for true except what is open to reason and reason declares valid. Our reason is spoiled by rationalism. It does not matter whether we are thinking of proof or intuition or emotions or occult faculties. I include in reason every faculty belonging to man as *humanus*. Our reason, which is identical with the essence of our being, is the rebel who will acknowledge that God stands beside him, but not over him; it is this unreasoning rebel who, in his presumption, calls God his "ideal companion." We venture to say that the well-known word of the serpent, "*Eritis sicut deus*," finds here its accurate modern translation. It is, however, not merely an expression of a modern sin, but of the original sin of man, from which come the ruin and the shambles of the human race. Faith in revelation, indeed, does not fit in with it; in fact it is its vehement contradiction. But this cannot be urged as a real objection against faith. For of the truth of God it must ever be said, since it is God's truth, that it is foolishness unto human reason and a stumbling-block unto the pride of man.

## III

### THE QUEST OF LIFE: SALVATION

WHEN we met yesterday, truth was our theme; a theme in which all other themes and questions are contained. We will have truth, if need be, at the cost of life. There is, however, another theme equal to truth in power and scope—Life. We will live, if we must, even at the expense of truth. But are we not all somehow aware that, in the final analysis, truth which does not make for life is not really truth? and, besides, who among us is not somehow persuaded that that life which is not truth cannot be life? We are constrained to search for the truth that is also life; and we cannot but seek the life that is also truth.

But even so,—we are *seeking* that life. As the search for truth indicates that we do not have it, so the quest of life signifies that we do not have it. Some one may object: "You would not be seeking truth if you did not know of it; and if life were not in you, you would not be seeking it."

But is not this reply a confession that our existence is a contradiction? Not only the latest school of theology but life itself is "dialectic," for the very reason that in all its forms it nurses

in its bosom this contradiction. We live—and yet we do not live. We live; assuredly, we live. We are living beings. We have part in the life of the world which biology describes for us. We possess vitality. We are a ripple in the stream of the *élan vital;* the wonderful, yet mysterious, force which we call life holds us in its grip. But we observe that this vitality means not only life; it also means death. One does not have to be a sophist or a cynic to call this life a desperate and vain struggle of the will-to-live against a must-die. Vain, I say, because in the end death remains victorious over life. A sober appreciation of what life actually is necessitates this conclusion.

Life, as biology describes it, is always also dissolution of life. We see life maintaining itself only by destroying other life. Vitality and mortality always go together. In the power to live there is always a potency that destroys life. And, alas, this tragic fact is far more evident in human than in subhuman life. Human life at its height is like the raging torrent which increases in power only to devastate. To be sure, man's life is fuller and richer than that of other living organisms; but we are also compelled to admit that nowhere is vitality so destructive an element as in the life of man.

Vitality, then, is not specifically a human characteristic. But the consciousness of life's inherent contradiction is peculiarly man's own.

Man is that being who *wills* to live, who seeks life and hungers for it. Mere living does not satisfy *him* just because existence does not only mean life, but also death and destruction. To *him*, life's meaning is not self-evident; *he*, and *he alone*, knows life to be a problem. I am not speaking here of life as a theoretical, but as a practical, problem. Man is man because he asks and must ask: "How can I live in reality?" that is, he confesses to himself that he cannot live as he is. The consciousness of such a distinction between vitality and life, between mere vegetating and living a life full of meaning, constitutes the essential difference between man and beast. It makes the *homo sapiens* a *humanus*, and distinguishes him from all other beings. Humanity in distinction from all other life is that kind of existence which is subject to and governed by a consciousness of this contradiction.

This contradiction, however, can be known only because animal vitality is not the only source of man's life. He towers above the lowlands of life and rises to the heights where he measures his actual life with the *true* life. Knowledge of the law of pure life enables us to see the contradiction. Therefore, we venture upon our quest of life, refusing to be satisfied with life as it is and evaluating it as untrue, inhuman, impure, unrighteous, and evil. But the same consciousness of the idea of our true life makes actual life a pathetic burden, a difficult

task that may even lead to despair. The realization of life's contradiction marks the birth of the distinctively human; and the chief purpose of life is to satisfy the craving for life.

That which enables us to overcome this contradiction in our existence we regard as important, great, and helpful. We do not hear it as merely one melody in the medley of life; it is the thematic melody of life itself. We may recognize now how inseparably the two are connected: the appreciation of life's contradiction and its solution. Our attempts at overcoming the discord are naturally determined by what we know of it. Not all men have an equally sensitive ear for it. Hence we are justified in saying that if an appreciation of life's discord and contradiction is humanity's birth hour, then the depth of this appreciation measures the depth of our humanity. The deeper man's insight into this contradiction, the more human he is. Only the superficial man, who lacks true humanity, will hold it lightly, and so stand convicted of shallowness.

The first and most superficial attempt to explain this contradiction is made by evolutionism. I do not refer to the biological theory of evolution in its narrower sense. That does not concern itself with man as *humanus*. It is interested only in animal man. But I do speak of an evolutionism which carries the biological interpretation of life into the realm of the human. Evolution of this

sort regards the contradiction of existence in man as a low stage of development, an imperfection, a "not-yet." Only the most superficial mind will rest satisfied with such an explanation. In so far as it is true, it is tautology; where it is more than tautology, however, it is false. To say that lack of conformity between true and actual life constitutes the difference between them is a tautological statement. But we are asking whence this difference arises. The tragedy of man's life consists in the very fact of such a difference and such an imperfection. Why are we imperfect and not perfect? Now if the evolutionist thinks that he has explained the difference by describing it as the difference between an initial and a final stage of a progressive development, the trifling banality becomes an untruth. The course of human life does not justify the assertion that the contradiction of existence is being reduced and overcome in the same proportion as we progress in culture. On the contrary, the higher we rise, the greater the discrepancy; the more irritating life's disproportion, the more sharply pointed the contradiction. If it were merely a difference instead of a contradiction, then a process of progress or summation—for all progress is summation—could overcome it, just as a hole can gradually be filled up by throwing in enough stones. This difference, however, cannot be likened to a hole, which is a negative, a non-existent; this difference is a positive, not

merely a negative; it is a minus over against a plus; it is an opposition, another principle, another direction, another quality; it is a negation. Negation is not merely negative, but a positive with reversed power. So I should define the distinction between difference and contradiction. Man's existence is not only imperfect; it is contradictory. He is not in a state of arrested development. He has in him contradictory principles which make a harmonious development altogether impossible. With his growth the contradiction in him also grows. His growth may be an increase of that which he already is; but just so the contradiction in him increases. Addition, development, only intensifies it, instead of overcoming it. Contradiction then cannot be silenced by development, for the very reason that it is not merely a difference, a negative, a "not-yet," but a contra-diction.

The abortive attempt through progress to heal the mortal wound in human life, namely, this contradiction, has two sources. First, it comes from an observation of the biological process, that is, an appreciation of the advancing differentiation in the forms of life. It is a mistake, however, to apply this law to human life. The very phenomenon of which we are speaking indicates that human life differs essentially from natural life. Nature knows contrasts only, but not contradictions. Contra-dictions are possible only where there are "dictions," that is, in the

realm of the mind; and here evolution in its biological meaning does not exist.

The development of civilization is the other source. Here we have before us the evidence of slow, but steady advance, of a gradual victory of mind over nature. Surely there is such an advance. But this fact does not touch our problem. We are not concerned with the question of the proportion of strength between mind and nature, i. e., with the dynamic relation between the two. Mind, as master of nature and as creator of civilization, shows itself as δύναμις as a quantity and not as a quality. Where the question is about quantity, there is the possibility of addition and summation and therefore of progress. But the better we learn to evaluate mind, not according to quantity but quality; the more we refuse to accept mind merely as a means to rule nature, but recognize its intrinsic value; the more we are concerned with personality, that is, with history as the battle-field where decisions are sought and found—the less we shall be tempted to give way to this idea of progressiveness. Quantitative progress, achieved by the mind of man, that is, in civilization, distinguished from culture, cannot be denied, but it cannot be admitted that such progress heals the mortal wound in human life. And this inability of our vaunted progress to cure the radical ills of life proves that we are confronted by a contradiction and not merely by a difference. He who looks to

progress for victory has not even a faint inkling of this contradiction.

Let us turn from evolutionism to another modern tendency which takes the contradiction much more seriously. This conceives man as a responsible and free personality. Here the contradiction is called "evil," and evil is held to be disobedience of the moral law—a crooked will. For the very reason that such evil is willed, it is no mere imperfection in the stage of development; it is a decision whereby a man makes himself guilty either of remaining in a primitive state or, what makes him guiltier still, of relapsing into it. Evil is not merely negative; it is the wilful deed for which the individual is held strictly accountable. This mode of thought brings us much nearer to the truth, in the light of which it becomes reasonably clear that the contradiction is much more than a vacuum in the mind. In harmony with this deeper comprehension of the antagonistic principles in man a corresponding reconciliation of this opposition must be sought that goes beyond the proposed solution of the evolutionist. Nothing less than a change of will is required. Man must turn from willing evil; it is not to be expected that the good will come naturally as a higher form of development but it is imperative that man's will must turn to the good. The necessity of such a change is intensified by the thought that the author of the law, which an evil will op-

poses, is the will of God. I would call this an ethico-religious cognition. Man is commanded to renounce his own egotistical will in favor of the divine will. This demand is reinforced by setting forth the doctrine of the divine will in the Bible and especially by its exemplification of the life of Jesus. By such an appeal to Jesus, this religious moralism thinks itself entitled to be called Christian. That such a claim is not justified will be duly shown.

But let us inquire whether this analysis of the situation is right and whether the solution here offered appears promising. I think the answer must be negative. For this view falsifies actualities; not in the same degree, however, as evolutionism does. The personal moral decision, which the ethico-religious standpoint demands, shows far deeper insight than naturalism. But its own error is no less fatal. From the fact that evil flows from a responsible will, it concludes that it could have been avoided. An ethical imperative, which indeed constitutes ethical personality, is taken to be the cognitive source of real moral freedom. Idealism, with which we are dealing here, is absolutely right in stressing individual responsibility and in not weakening it by hiding behind collectivism. But it errs in isolating the individual and in making him autonomous in his relation to good and evil. Individualism and freedom of will are the two errors of idealistic liberalism. Compared with

it, naturalism has a certain right in so far as it points to human solidarity and to an inherent necessity. But these two points of view cannot be harmonized, because one weakens the other. Instead of attempting to resolve, we ought to follow the contradiction to its very bottom. The fact that man *does* evil, indicates that he *is* evil. Evil is lodged in the very centre of his will. The contradiction in our existence, the depth of which is called "the evil," is not merely the isolated fact of a moment, although it always expresses itself in acts; it is rather a quality of our present personal existence. Certainly the good must be done; but man finds himself in such a situation that he cannot do it. Assuredly every individual is responsible for his own evil deed. But the root of evil reaches to a depth where all men are one. The evil is the collective deed and, therefore, the collective guilt of man, even though it does not cease to be each individual's deed and guilt.

This needs further explanation. There is a difference between evil and sin. Evil may be said to be a static and neutral conception. It merely indicates that my will does not conform to law, perhaps the divine law; it appears as a crooked line when tested by the straight rule of law. Sin, however, is a conception connoting personal action, active personality. Sin means that I am in wrong relation to God and that I have torn myself away from an original divinely

given possibility. Sin means, then, neither a "not-yet" as evolutionism says, nor a "not-now" as the moralists say: it is a "no-longer." It is an alienation, a disrupted relation, a having left the Father. The contradiction in our existence can be recognized only as an impenetrable mystery. On the one hand it is a deed, but a deed which precedes every single act; on the other hand it is my guilt, my responsible act, but, at the same time, mine in the sense that it belongs to all. On the one hand, it is disobedience against God; on the other, a position already lost, a good relation with God already destroyed. The heart of evil, or of sin, must therefore be said to be guilt. Guilt, as a necessary aspect of evil, presupposes that the original fellowship with God is broken. Something has happened over which we have no longer any control; and the damage is beyond our ability to repair. Only when sin is defined as guilt is evil comprehended in its personal form. It is not *something* that is wrong between God and myself. Evil is not *a something* between God and man; it is myself in the wrong position. When this position is taken, I cannot change it. Guilt means the loss of ability to return to my original place. Evil is taken really seriously only when it is understood as guilt.

If it be so regarded, the possibility of overcoming the contradiction from our side is definitely denied. We have no power over our guilt;

even if we had the power of making an evil will into a good will. A *non posse* forms an insurmountable barrier preventing our doing so; but what is still more, we *dare not*. We cannot and we dare not.

Surely the illusory character of the moralist's solution is now clearly seen. If evil is really sin and guilt, if the contradiction consists in man's antagonism toward God, then a reconciliation on the part of man is out of the question. And, I say it advisedly, not merely a complete, but even a partial, clearing up of the contradiction on man's part is thus excluded. I do not deny that human activity can do something. Indeed it can do much; and a great deal more ought to be done than is done. Human activity, however, is capable only of changing relations between men, in so far as they are visible to the eye; it cannot change the deep inner heart-relation between them, much less the relation between God and man. All human activity, even though it be done in the name of God, with the exalted purpose of building the kingdom of God, must accept this indictment. Let us have no misunderstanding. What man can do here on earth by his ethical endeavors is not without value, not unnecessary—but indeed very necessary. By these endeavors, however, he does not realize the kingdom of God, for they do not remove the contradiction. On the contrary, such energetic moral activity, directed at external condi-

tions, good and necessary as it is, carries with it great danger. It may lead to the opinion that by such means the great need of the world, which is deliverance from its evil, is being satisfied; and so it may become an obstacle to an appreciation of the real evil, which is the necessary presupposition of real help. The situation demands a penetrating insight into what we are, through a true apprehension of the ultimate hopelessness of all human activity. This appreciation of our helplessness and hopelessness and of the need and desire of deliverance, the New Testament calls repentance. Repentance is despair of self, despairing of self-help in removing the guilt that we have brought upon us. Repentance means a radical turning away from self-reliance to trust in God alone. Yes, to repent means to recognize self-trust to be the heart of sin.

Therefore repentance, which we called the presupposition of help, is in fact a first effect of divine help. It is a first result of the proclamation of the Gospel of God's good help which is in Jesus Christ. Indeed, an appreciation of the contradiction in our existence, of which we have as yet spoken, to be sure, only in abstract terms, is possible solely through the concrete fact of our reconciliation in Jesus Christ. Through him the antagonism has not only been overcome, but through him alone knowledge of the contradiction of sin itself is made possible and real.

We have observed indeed that there is a recognition of life's contradiction apart from Jesus Christ. But, whether naturalistic or idealistic, it is superficial. A real apprehension of his sinfulness, man, torn loose from God, can never have, because he *is* torn loose. He may remind himself of his divine origin; he may thus be not without some misgiving of the disruption which has taken place. But the depth and width of the chasm which has resulted, he cannot see, because he does not stand above but within it. Only from the higher point of view, where God himself stands, could he see and know how great are his sin and misery.

But are we able to speak of it in spite of our low place? Yes, because and in so far as God reveals to us our lost origin and calls us back to him. As Christ shows us again in himself the likeness of our first estate, he lets us know how great our fall has been. A perfect appreciation of life's contradiction is given only when the contradiction is resolved. Indeed, acknowledging it and resolving it are not two acts but one. God revealing himself to us in *his* reality reveals to us *our* actuality. Only as he becomes real to us in Christ, do we ourselves become real. Then indeed we can and must break through all naturalistic and idealistic illusions to true self-knowledge. Resolving the contradiction means the suspension of that which lies between God and man, the suspension of guilt.

This is what is meant by forgiveness. Forgiveness is not an idea, a thought over which man of himself has power. A forgiveness which we derive from an idea of God, when we say: "Men are expected to forgive each other, therefore God also must forgive, for forgiveness is a part of divine love"—such forgiveness is presumption on divine sovereignty.* Forgiveness may be either a phantom of man's carelessness or it may be a deed of God; a deed and word which God himself must do and speak, a sovereign act of God by which he places men in a new position with regard to himself because he so wills, a change of situation which happens only by an incomprehensible divine miracle in history.

So, and not otherwise, do the Scriptures speak of forgiveness. The Gospel proclaims forgiveness to us as having happened in and through the fact of Jesus Christ; it proclaims forgiveness as being grounded in the divine deed of reconciliation in the cross of Christ.

I shall try to put it in a still more emphatic way.

Man is separated from God through sin and guilt. The original union with God, in which he

*This stressing of God's sovereignty does not imply an indifference toward the ethical character of God's forgiveness. God forgives because he is love. But that he is that love which the Gospel alone shows him to be, is known to us only through his revelation and redemption. Divine love as known through this act and divine "love" as asserted on the ground of some immanent, *a priori* God-idea, or of the general "behavior of the universe" are totally different. Cf., on this subject, Brunner, "*Der Mittler*."

was created, has been destroyed; man is cut off from the tree of life. Therefore a contradiction beyond repair clings to our life. This contradiction is characteristic of the very essence of man because his relation to God is identical with his essence; and therefore there is no possibility of man's returning to God. All the ways of man are sinful ways. There is no road to innocence for the guilty, no road to peace for God's enemy. For wherever man goes, this contradiction goes with him. He *is* separated from God.

But it pleased God in his mercy to throw a bridge across the chasm between himself and man and to blaze a trail where man himself could not go. It pleased God to visit man who cannot come to God. This approach of God to man, this divine condescension, this entering into a world of sin and sinners burdened with their sense of contradiction to him, just this constitutes the mystery of divine revelation and reconciliation in the incarnate and crucified Christ. That God removes the contradiction by bearing it himself, this is the cross—*Agnus Dei qui tollit peccata mundi.* That which removes the curse of history is done in history. The chasm is bridged and the new life beyond history is founded. At this point in the finite historical world, entrance is made into the eternal world of God.

This constitutes, as we said, the absolutely

incomparable message of the Gospel, namely that God comes to man and that man does not go to God; that God resolves the contradiction and not man; that God makes reconciliation and not man; just this constitutes the difference between the Gospel and all other religions and philosophies. All religion, in the final analysis, bases salvation on an activity of man, either on his cognition, his cult, or his mystical meditations. All religion and philosophy—as Luther saw it clearly in his day—seek righteousness by works, by human self-assertion.* Man assumes that he can help himself by means of his philosophy or his religion. The Gospel is the end of these efforts. It gives up or denies the possibility of every human approach to God, even by the path of religion. It opens another way, the only way, God's way. There only the word "faith" and, therefore, the word "God" find their true meaning. For faith is real faith only when man has given himself up and relinquished his trust in his religion and rests on God alone. When man no longer relies upon what is his, when he no longer stands or walks on his feet,

*This is true also of that kind of Hindu mysticism which has often been paralleled with Christianity, the Tengalai or southern school of the Ramanuja sect. It is true that absolute passivity on the side of man is asserted; but, as there is no historical mediator of divine grace, the movement toward God remains, as in all mysticism, man's own, even if it is *interpreted* as God's work. This difference of interpretation has no practical effect. Even here the ideal is to become a saint, to reach the highest point of mystical perfection, of Bhakti. There is no justification of the sinner, which is the essence of Christianity.

but clings to the hand which is stretched out to him from beyond; that is, when the basis of his life is only what God offers him in his Word—then he truly lives by faith in God. This is what Paul means by justification by faith alone; this is the meaning of *sola fide*. *Sola fides* only is real *fides*. And only in such wise is God taken seriously. For God is God only when he is the sole helper; when, as the Bible says, he is not forced to give his glory to another, when without competitors he is the foundation of salvation. Where salvation is divided between God and man, man appears as co-partner and as equal with God. As in Stoic philosophy and in all religions, he is a fellow-god. God is not Lord, not sovereign, but a partner; but this is mocking God. God proves himself to be the one God, that is, the true God, only when he proves himself to be the one helper.

We are merely repeating what has been already said, when we say that this positive can be and *is* the only positive to the negative of the contradiction. Every other attempt to solve the contradiction must show itself insufficient, inadequate, even godless, upon closer examination. The contradiction of sin and guilt can only be removed by reconciliation and redemption.

But will it be removed? Is the Gospel true or is it invented by men? This question man must inevitably ask; and no man can answer it. Only one answer can be given to him who asks

the question: "Are you a spectator in this question, or is it really your own question?" If it is really your own, if it expresses your life-problem, then you will be answered. For in the quest itself is the beginning of the answer. Pascal represents Christ as saying "Thou wouldst not seek me, hadst thou not already found me." This is the only proof of the truth of the Gospel of redemption, that is, the truth which cannot be proved; but, like all basic truth, it must be believed. What can be proved is *eo ipso* unimportant.

Demonstration is possible only with tangible and visible phenomena. Faith only can prove the reality of God, because God cannot be known by theoretical reason but must be comprehended by an act of decision. The word of God can be answered only by the yea of decision and not by the yea of a theoretical conviction. The word of the cross may be to-day a stumbling-block as it was in the days of the apostles, but it may also be the divine, God-given, possibility of faith.

We said, Jesus Christ means the abolition of the contradiction, i. e., reconciliation; so faith is the act of acceptance, i. e., decision. Salvation is not at once completed but it is begun. When we believe in the word alone and therefore in the promise of the future we have entered the way of salvation. This assurance of the future, through faith, is present salvation. It is a having and a not-having, a standing beyond the

contradiction while still standing in it. It is the justification of the sinner who, though justified, does not cease being a sinner to the last day of his earthly life, but continues as much in need of forgiveness as he was on the day of his conversion. The life of the Christian is never a possession but remains, as it begins, a decision. One never *is* a Christian. To be a Christian upon earth means to know that we are *called* through Christ, i. e., that God has accepted us. Therefore faith must cling solely to the word, and not to experience. Experience comes of faith, but faith never comes of experience. The principle of the Christian life is not experience but the word of God, which can only be believed and cannot be experienced. For this very reason faith is and remains a decision; and, therefore, it remains a principle of crisis for all life, even for the life of the Christian and, no less, for that of the Christian Church. The Christian then is to be recognized as such not by the fact that he himself has overcome the contradiction, but by the fact that he knows, while standing in the contradiction, that it has been overcome of God. The Christian himself feels the contradiction much more intensely and deeply than others. One could almost say: "Faith is its intensification; the crisis of the incurable disease." But it is a beneficial crisis, a crisis which means health. That this is so is confirmed by the fact that the believer never thinks of himself as

alone addressed of God, for he knows of others like him. To be a believer, to be under grace, is to be a part of the communion of saints—of the Church. But time will not permit me to deal with this side of the Christian faith, however necessary it is for its real understanding.

I shall consider only one more question before I close this discourse. One may ask, Does not such a pessimistic view of human ability destroy moral initiative? This is by no means a new objection. Paul and the Reformers heard it in their day. But it is asked by one who knows neither the disease nor its remedy. He does not know the disease, that is, the basic contradiction in life, for he thinks he is able to cure it. This very delusion prevents real activity. He who relies on himself is a dreamer of dreams, though he may think he is a realist. He only can be effectually active, who has lost all delusions concerning himself and looks to God for all his help. This may seem to be paradoxical but paradox is the essence of the Gospel. History itself confirms it. The times in which men expected nothing of themselves but everything of God were the epochs in which the greatest deeds were done. Why should it be so? That man alone is really bound to God and is one with him who looks to him for everything. Indeed, the only activity worthy of the name is born out of a consciousness that one belongs to God; not that he, in his weakness, clings to

Him, but that God, in his almighty power, holds him to Himself. As power to act comes only of true faith, so also purity is found only when a man no longer follows his own will or whim but the will that God has given him. Self-will is God's great opponent in this world. Only when the self-reliant Ego is dethroned and Christ is Lord, can one do that which is well-pleasing to God. He only who confesses from the heart that Christ is Lord is capable of doing works that will continue in eternity. To confess that Christ is Lord one must see him not merely as a man but as God himself; not the teacher of a doctrine but the bearer of salvation—the Saviour. He who says Christ is Lord must also say Christ is the only begotten of the Father, born and crucified for the salvation of the world.

What then is life? That alone is true life that is divine, eternal, freed of its contradiction. Our temporal life therefore is not real life, for it is subject to death. This statement applies to all historical existence without exception. All changes, all so-called progress however important and far-reaching, are merely variations within the scope of this fundamental contradiction. That one should gain life it is necessary that this antagonism should be overcome by a power beyond history; that is, not by a divine salvation in history but the divine salvation *of* history; by salvation that is given to us and that is now recognized and accepted of us.

To have part in the divine life of Jesus Christ by faith, to stand in the midst of history and be comprehended in eternal salvation through the reconciliation made in him who is called the Life and the Way to Life—this is to be a Christian—to have life eternal.

## IV

## THE PROBLEM OF ETHICS

THE question which my friends and I are most frequently asked, after we have expounded our theological position, is, "How about ethics?" And we may thank God this question *is* asked. One does not understand the gospel of revelation and redemption through Jesus Christ if it does not answer for him the question: "What shall I do?" A theology that does not call for and strengthen ethical activity is certainly not a Christian theology. The ethical question is the supreme question of all life.

The question is asked because men suspect that faith in the word of God, or in Jesus Christ and his redemptive work, is not an adequate motive for effective Christian ethics. Such a suspicion rests on a grave misunderstanding. It is the error with which Paul had to contend and which was the ground of the opposition of the Roman Catholics to Luther and Calvin. This misunderstanding is based upon the erroneous presupposition that when one regards all good work as God's and not his own, he will not feel any responsibility to put forth effort of his own. To controvert this misunderstanding I submit again my own thesis: the *sola gratia*, *sola fide*,

*soli deo gloria* of the Christian faith, that is, the Pauline view of faith, is the only solid foundation for ethics; and faith in redemption through Christ is the only real source of that ethical renewal and energy to which Paul refers when he speaks about the new creation in Christ. There is no other actual goodness of will than that which is the fruit of faith in justification by grace alone. I shall explain and seek to prove this thesis in the following discourse.

It is not difficult to find the source of the misunderstanding spoken of above. How often does a perfectly faultless orthodoxy go with moral sterility! How often has the Church, even in its palmiest days of Pauline orthodoxy, taken the wrong side when moral issues were at stake! How often has it been silent when it should have protested, and protested when it should have been silent! I am thinking of the questions relating to the conflict between capital and labor, to the waging of war among nations, and the like. What does this hesitant attitude of the Church prove? Only this: that there is a cheap substitute for faith which looks like, but *is not* in reality, faith; it is assent of the head to intellectual formulas instead of belief of the heart in the word of God. *Corruptio optimi pessima.* It is always the best things that are in the greatest danger of adulteration and cheap imitation. This however is not proof that they

are not the best things. It is simply a warning against the confusion of orthodoxy and living faith, that is, the isolation of the intellectual element in faith from faith* as a whole. Belief sometimes amounts to a mere theoretical attitude toward life; it is no longer faith, i. e., trust in a person, but only the shadow of it. What then do we mean by saying that faith in Christ is the only basis of a vital ethic?

Let us first consider the negative side of this statement. Apart from Christianity what is the problem of ethics? There are many answers. From the lower levels of crude materialism which proclaims the right of the strongest individual and of the strongest appetite, from a shallow utilitarianism, a superficial biological pragmatism, which interprets moral life as a mere adaptation or adjustment to our natural surroundings, there are many upward steps to the heights of moral consciousness where we hear words like duty, categorical imperative, inborn divine law of God, brotherhood of man, fatherhood of God. I suppose we may assume without discussion that only a morality that is based upon religious premises—whether or not they are consciously held by the individual—is capable of fulfilling the highest ethical ideals. It may be taken as a truism to say that the closer

*The Greek πίστις, Latin *fides*, German *Glaube*, cannot be translated into English except by two words: faith *and* belief. There is need for some such word as faith-belief.

ethics and religion are related to each other, the truer both of them are. Only ethical religion is truly religious and only religious ethics is really ethical. But the question is, what do we mean by the terms *religious* and *ethical* when the two are thus vitally related?

To-day in modern Protestant theology the slogan, *ethical religion* or *religious ethics,* by which Christianity is characterized, applies to the erroneously so-called Christianity of which we spoke in the first three lectures and which in fact reduces Christian faith to Stoic religious idealism. It confounds the gospel of Christ with the general rational ideas of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God which the Stoic philosophers taught; and it identifies the New Testament message of the Kingdom of God coming on earth with the rational idea of the natural historical process of ethical and social evolution.

If this interpretation of Christianity were correct, it would be reduced to a conception of religion and morals which existed in the pagan world long before Christ's coming. And I may say in addition that it is a conception that he never taught. We are not, however, concerned with this historical question. We shall speak here only of the ethical theory as such.

This theory is based upon an inner law or ideal, the rational ideal or ethical law of human society. It is a legal ethics. The modern

term, value-ethics, is simply another word for the same thing. I have personally great admiration for these Stoics ancient and modern; I owe too much to men like Kant and Fichte to speak contemptuously of them. There is much truth in the Kantian or Stoic ideal of personality and of society based upon it. It has had astonishing influence upon the development of the western world. If, in spite of this appreciation, I have to break away from this idealism, it is at the point where Paul broke away from the Judaizers, the Reformers from the Roman Church. We have to ask whether Christian ethics is to be founded on an immanent law or on faith. This question of the past we have not outlived; it is still the most vital issue of our time.

The Stoic or the modern theologian, who wholly misunderstands the Sermon on the Mount, believing it a collection of ethical precepts, an ethical programme which Jesus as the supreme teacher of morality laid down for all times, is merely concerned about *what* is to be done. He does not ask, *Who* can do it? He thinks that the law or the ideal is a sufficient dynamic for morality. This is what I must call the mistaken ideology of the modern theologian, his lack of realism, his failure to understand the actual ethical situation. Stoics, ancient and modern, are bent upon working out ethical programmes, appeals, postulates; but they never ask whether or not there is a will to accept and

obey them. They do not see the main factor, the human will, as it is: sin-bound and egoistic. They are blind to the real enemy who must be fought. Nay, this failure to recognize the enemy *is* the real enemy, the fontal source of evil in the world: from it flow self-reliance, self-confidence, the illusion of freedom and good-will upon which all idealism is based—the inability to realize the helpless condition of man.

Why do not men see their own helplessness and need? Because they do not measure man's status and capacity against the standard of God; they fix their eyes on man, his personality and culture, not on God. They do not really come into the presence of God, the Almighty and Holy One, before whom man can stand only as a sinner. They know only the God who is in their hearts, in the depth of their own souls. The most cogent motive of their ethics is, accordingly, self-esteem, and its leading purpose is self-realization. It is buttressed by the optimistic self-valuation of which we spoke in our previous lectures and which is based upon the conception of the immanence of God in man, of man's intrinsic goodness and of his autonomy, which does not distinguish between God's will or law and the will or law of his own self. God is not regarded as Lord but rather, in the appropriate modern phrase, as the "ideal companion."

When we know God as Lord, we know our-

selves as sinners who are incapable of doing good. Only when we confess our helplessness are we prepared to accept God as Lord; and only then is the power of our self-satisfied pride, our self-sufficiency, broken. Until such a confession is made human arrogance must still prevail, in spite of all moral aspiration. Man's moral idealism and moral activity do not remove the source of evil, the arrogant assumption that man's will and volition are not dependent upon God. The enemy of God and the good has not been vanquished, but has retreated and entrenched himself at the centre of man's being; the decisive battle has not yet been fought, the battle which was fought between Jesus and the Pharisees, between Paul and the Judaizers, between Luther and the Romanists —the battle between God and the selfish will of man, between grace and self-righteousness.

The first step, then, toward true righteousness is the sincere confession that we are sinners, not merely now and then but, so far as we are concerned, sinners always, hopeless sinners. This confession of absolute helplessness and despair in the presence of the Holy God is hard for us to make, as we may feel at this very moment. We cannot help but powerfully revolt against it. This feeling of revolt is clear evidence that we are approaching the centre of the question, the truth which Paul called a stumbling-block to the Jew, that is, to the religious

moralist. It amounts to saying that God alone is good, that the good will does not dwell in us but comes from him only. The capitulation of our proud Ego in the presence of the majestic God is the victory of the divine truth, of the word of God, over our own hearts and wills, over the lie of our life, that holds us all spell-bound and is the root of all evil. It is the lie of self-reliance, of the refusal to depend upon the grace of God.

This capitulation of the stronghold of the Ego can only be effected, as I pointed out yesterday, by the action of God himself when he breaks through the inmost bulwarks and takes captive the human will, not by force, but by his sovereign forgiveness and the revelation of his incredible love. We cannot attain his righteousness by dint of will, but he apprehends us by his grace. He calls us his children before we have done anything to merit it. He gives us the new standard of value which by nature we neither have nor can acquire. He marks us as his own possession and gives us his holiness. He does it by his word alone, and we are in the new life because he says we are and we believe his assurances. If you *believe*, you *are* and you *have* what God says. The acceptance of God's gift through faith *is* the creation of the new man, the second birth. This miracle Paul calls justification by faith. Christ is the stamp by which we are marked as God's own possession.

Through his redemption man ceases to be a being of no value and becomes a being of infinite worth. By the cross he is adopted as a son of God.

Through the act of redemption God actually becomes Lord of man. The barrier between God and man, guilt and self-will, is broken down, and thus God-will or good will is realized in man's will. This is accomplished not by human volition but by God's act. It is of utmost importance that we remember that what appears on the one side as God's act, is, on the other side, man's decision. The very act by which God reveals himself to man is the birth of a new will in man. For will is the material factor of faith. When man accepts God's grace the meaning of creation is restored, so that the relationship between God and man is one of dependence upon grace and not one of self-reliance and independence of God. Only when one lives by grace is the prayer fulfilled, "Thy will be done." Then only is good will, which is the same as God-will, actualized in men. Good will is identical with the surrender of self-will, an act of which we are not capable, but which is done by God for us and in us, and which we accept in faith as having been done.

This is the foundation of ethics in the gospel. If one grasps this, he will not again repeat the false statement, which is so often heard, that the Pauline doctrine of grace lacks ethical

power. In fact it is the only conception that goes to the root of the ethical problem. For it is the only one that is not satisfied with a mere ethical ideal and programme or with an outward manifestation of a moral attitude and disposition; it penetrates to the source of good will and is concerned not primarily with the object but with the subject of morality. For morality is a matter of inner life and not of outward behavior. All non-Christian ethics viewed from this central point is a sort of behaviorism, since it is more concerned with the action than the actor. To quote again a word of Luther: "It is not good works that make a good man, but a good man who does good works"; that is, first the man and then his works; first the stand and power and then the leap; first the pure blood and then the healthy body; first the heart and then the acts. The change of heart, which takes place through faith—I repeat, through real faith and not a counterfeit—is the supreme ethical fact without which one can hardly think or speak of ethics, goodness, or good will.

I should like to explain this with the aid of two other conceptions. To be good, a will must have two properties; it must be pure and it must be strong. Purity comes first, for it is the bent of the will. Purity of will can be had only at the cost of self-will. Self-will is will bent in the wrong direction; it is centripetal instead of centrifugal. The direction is changed by repentance

and faith. Only when self-will abdicates can God's will be enthroned alone. His will however is directed from above downward, not from below upward. It is directed toward the world, not from the world. So far as my will is concerned, it is wrong. My will, though wrong, does not cease to act when I become a Christian; the sinner when he is justified does not cease to be a sinner. But God's will overcomes my self-will so far as I in faith depend upon God's act and so far as I confess that I am wrong and God is right. Then I have the will to serve instead of the will to be served. This is purity of heart.

The second point is really not a second but the first viewed from another side. Morality apart from Christ, ethical religious idealism, is an aspiration to the ideal, an attempt at self-realization, a movement toward a right position. Moral life is represented as a ladder on which one must ascend to reach the top rung. In this upward movement the will is cross-eyed. It seems to be the will of God, that is, the ideal; in reality it is the will of man striving for self-realization. With all his striving man will never attain. This is the tragedy of the ethics of self-righteousness. In the life of faith, however, this aspiration does not appear. As a believer I need not strive to get a place, to reach a point, or to realize myself. By the gracious word of God in Christ I *am* placed; I *have* obtained my

"standard"; my self *is* realized. The motive of my will is no longer an ideal that lures, but an act of God that constrains, me. The will is no longer on its way *toward* but on its way *from*. The motor power is no longer an ideal which draws but God who pushes me. The will is no longer divided but unified. The will of God is no more an ideal but a reality. Faith does not work in order to, but because of; not in order to get righteousness but because it has got it. Its motive is thankfulness for what has been given, not aspiration toward what ought to be. It is no more an attempt to bridge the abyss between the ideality of God and the reality of man, but the joyful acknowledgment that the abyss is bridged by God himself in Christ. Faith is the God-given participation of man in God's activity. Then only is God's will an actuality in life and no longer an ideal or law. Love is the new motive of action which is not known in non-Christian ethics; love in the non-sentimental, paradoxical, eschatological meaning of the term in the New Testament, the love that we have because He first loved us. The effort and pride of self-realization give way to the humble and joyful participation in God's own work. The heart then is no longer set against the moral law, because God has taken possession of the whole personality, of its centre.

I say this takes place *in so far* as faith is begotten in us. This change is always to be regarded as

the miracle that God may work in us and as something that we cannot achieve of ourselves. This proviso must be kept in mind when I go on to demonstrate that faith overcomes the contradictions of non-Christian ethics. I beg of you to observe that I am speaking of faith, and not of the Christian individual, because every so-called Christian—and who is not a so-called Christian?—is a man who has faith and does not have faith; who, when he confesses his faith must cry: "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief."

Let us consider first the contradiction that exists between concrete reality and the abstract. Natural ethics drifts between two poles: On the one hand there is an easy-going naturalism, a tendency to adjust oneself to the world without much conflict, and on the other, a radical abstract idealism that proclaims high-sounding programmes and postulates which are too far removed from the world to be practical but which stir the mind with enthusiasm and pride.* The ethics of faith is both absolutely idealistic and radical on the one hand and absolutely con-

*This radicalism is often confused with Christian earnestness, as if it were a specially Christian virtue to overlook reality and propound postulates which are not only impossible but ethically wrong in a world of sinful men. It is the false absoluteness of the Anabaptist ethics which, e. g., does not recognize the coercive power of the state because of an abstract principle of pacifism. This confusion is the result of taking the Sermon on the Mount as a law book or a social programme. Nothing but confusion comes out of this manifestly super-ethical earnestness. Real Christian ethics is no less "revolutionary," no less aggressive, but always realistic in its evaluation of the need of the present moments, in its clairvoyance with regard to the situation at hand.

crete and practicable on the other. For through faith man is not removed from his present condition, but is "called" of God to do his will in his historical and psychological situation, the will of God the Creator and God the Saviour. As the will of the *Creator* it is the will which expresses itself in act and reality, in things, conditions, and men as they are. It is for this reason that this reality must be regarded with the utmost reverence. But God's will is also the will of the *Saviour* who says: "Behold, I make all things new," the world, as originally created, having become distorted. The will of God therefore is both conservative and revolutionary as no other will can be. This union of resolute conservation and radical reconstruction is realized in the love of Christ. To love your neighbor means to take him as he is, to obey the divine call that comes to you through his present condition, to listen to what he says to you through his being here, to accept the world as it is without impatiently revolting from it. This active and practical love is the opposite of abstract idealism, which measures the world by what it ought to be according to the moral reason, and becomes indifferent to or loses all patience with the world as it actually is. On the other hand, when the Christian hears the voice of the Creator coming to him out of things and men as they are, he discerns the distortion of the order of creation and the horrible disfiguration of man's image, when it is placed side by

side with the image of God. In other words, the sharp contradiction between the world that is and the world to come is glaringly revealed. The Christian man can do naught else but give his whole life to the restoration of the divine image in man. In this respect faith is more revolutionary than idealism of whatever form, which is never conscious of the full significance of the contradictions in man's life. To love is to imitate God the Creator and God the Saviour.

The second contradiction is that of individualism and collectivism. Faith is an absolutely individual affair. You can have mass-suggestion or mass-hysteria, but never mass-decision or mass-responsibility. In fact man never is really addressed as exclusively an individual by himself until he is challenged to live the life of faith, to take the full responsibility for his life upon himself, and to stand eye to eye before God. There is nothing so solitary and personal as the call of God and the personal "Yes" in response to it. No other being can share with a man this responsibility; the last decisive step must be taken absolutely by one's self alone. But if it is true that there cannot be *collective* Christianity, it is true also that there cannot be anything like *private* and individual Christianity.* For it is in the very act of faith that in-

*If what Rauschenbusch saw is true, namely, that modern Christianity has lost its sense of the social factor in Christian ethics, it is no less true that *all* Christian activity, social as well

dividualistic isolation is renounced. By the solitary divine call and man's answer to it, the communion is founded that is the only real communion upon earth, namely, the Church. All other communions are either natural or artificial. You are either born into them or you make them. The Church is neither natural nor artificial; you cannot be born into it and you cannot make it; but by grace you must be reborn into it. The ἐκκλησία is the communion of the κλητοί, that is, of those whom God has called to be members of that body of which Christ is the head. It is the God-made, and therefore the eternal, community.

It is characteristic of real Christian faith that it binds together the individual and all mankind with two insoluble bonds: the solidarity of creation and sin and the solidarity of redemption and hope. This solidarity differs from the humanistic modern idea of democracy and world-brotherhood as widely as Jesus Christ crucified differs from the Stoic ideal of the philosopher.

The third contradiction is that of activity and passivity. Since faith is the capitulation of man before God, the utter despair of what one is and does, it requires wholly the attitude of passivity and receptivity. In the act of believing you *do* nothing, you merely *get* something. But it is the great paradox of faith that what is got or begot-

as private or individual, must come from that solitary act which the Bible calls regeneration. This is the presupposition of a new social order.

ten is the decision of the will of man for God, the one and only act in which man is really free and which is wholly his own. No man understands how this can be; but every true believer knows that it is so. The same thing must be said about the effect of faith. Faith is first quiet, peace, rest; the turmoil of the soul is silenced; the strain of striving has come to an end, for as a believer one *has* and *is*. Above his head hangs the escutcheon of his divine hereditary nobility, the credentials of his citizenship in heaven. Whosoever believeth in Me *hath* eternal life. This quiet and peace, this having and being, however, is not that of the mystic who passively enjoys heaven upon earth. It is rather the call of the Lord of hosts who is constantly recruiting men for his army, the *ecclesia militans*. He who has taken the inner fortress of your soul, i. e., your Ego, will not stop there but will take you with him to conquer the world. The eschatological substance of faith works itself out in supremely aggressive action in the world.

It is, however, necessary to distinguish this aggressive activity from the radicalism and activism of our modern evolutionary ethics. Permit me to use, by way of illustration, two types: the man of the East and the man of the West. The religious Oriental views the world and the time process as in static opposition to eternity. Since he is interested only in eternity, he is indifferent toward reality in time and space. The

modern Westerner on the other hand is not so much concerned about eternity as about the time-process of the world, which he calls the coming of the kingdom of God. He really believes that, through human activity, the kingdom of God is coming, advancing upon earth, slowly, it may be, yet progressively. Christian faith opposes both these views. The Christian is not indifferent toward the time-process nor does he believe in the evolution of the kingdom by steady progress. In fact the idea of the kingdom of God and that of evolution and progress are mutually antagonistic. The Christian stands within the time-process, takes part in it with all the energy in him as if he had to bring about the salvation of the world, and as if his own salvation depended on his efforts, but he knows at the same time that God alone can save and can bring the kingdom when he pleases. He is terrifically in earnest about taking his part in the coöperative task of the betterment of humanity. But with all his earnestness, he recognizes that the task must ultimately be accomplished by the working of God's omnipotent love alone. He takes seriously that which man can attain but he will never confuse this sphere of relative human progress and betterment with the kingdom of God. Not that which men do when they try to do the good is the kingdom's coming, but that which God alone can do and is doing among us *through his word.*

This brings us to a last point, upon which I should like to dwell a little: the contradiction of optimism and pessimism in the ethical outlook. The mystical religions of the East are pessimistic in regard to the world. World is *Maya*, death, error, fate. Therefore men hope for deliverance *from* the world. The Western idea of ethical evolution is optimistic. There is a deep-rooted conviction that man at heart is good, and consequently men believe in the steady progress of civilization, culture, religion and morality. While the Eastern mystic solves the world problem by denying the reality of the temporal, sinful world, the man of the West bases his hope of deliverance from an evil world upon human activity and historical development. The Christian is not deceived by either of these illusions. He believes in a salvation, not *from* the world, not *in* the world, but in the salvation *of* the world. He alone knows God as both Creator and Saviour, the world as creation and vale of death. In Christ, who has overcome death, he has the assurance of final resurrection, that is, the restoration and perfection of the whole creation. This is God's solution of the world conflict, a solution that goes beyond the opposition between pessimistic quietism and optimistic activism.

But both these tendencies, Eastern mysticism and Western moralism, have endangered the Christian Church from its beginning. Mys-

ticism is practised perhaps most consistently in the Greek orthodox monastery and hardly needs *our* attention, although the laziness of the flesh is always a danger to be avoided in the Christian life. Our present danger is the activism of the West, as one finds it perhaps most typically represented in the "socialized" church of America. Christian faith is here jeopardized by submergence in mere social ethical idealism and pragmatism. This means that the spiritual reserve, the capital of faith which previous generations have stored up, is thoughtlessly wasted by a merely expansive activity. Bent on work, one forgets the source of works. Full of good will to do something, one immediately loses the keen sense of *what* ought to be done. The Church, which has no conception of what it means to stand on the word of God alone, is in process of being dissolved into the world, of first becoming a great social-welfare trust and then wholly disappearing. The socialized church in its present form is the Church in the beginning of its dissolution.*

I can well understand the truly Christian motives which lead to this evolution. *Christus non est otiosus.* Faith has its basis in the Word

*It may be helpful for the understanding of this criticism of modern socialized Christianity to know that this criticism comes from *within* that movement which is generally called "religious socialism." It must be remembered that the "Barthian theology" had as its origin the teaching of men like Blumhardt, Ragaz, and Kutter, the forerunners and, some of them, the friends of Rausch-

but it wants to work. Faith is born in the secret of the heart, but it must break out in works of love. Faith is an explosive energy; or it is not faith. But not all explosive energies are faith-born. Not all ethical activity flows from the fontal source of trust in God. There is always danger that, in her activity, the Church will depend upon a natural dynamic, upon the impulse and ambition of expansion, and so become a prey to self-reliance and pride. The Church, like a vessel flying the counterfeit colors of the kingdom of God, may proudly sail upon the troubled seas, steered by men all too human and borne on and driven by winds and waves all too natural.

It is characteristic of modern Protestant activism that it has lost its feeling for the absolute contradiction, the eschatological gulf, between the world of God and the world as it is. The word of God is toned down, reduced to religious literature and moral programs, so as to harmonize it with present thought and life. Theology is changed into the philosophy, history, and psychology of religion. For the study of the meaning of Biblical revelation men have substituted sociology, psychology, pedagogy;

enbusch. What separates us from our religious socialist friends is neither their socialism nor their anti-militarism but their belief that, by such social activity, the kingdom of God is coming closer and closer; and that such a social-ethical activity can be detached from the preaching of the Gospel, from the Church and theological thought. They seem also to confuse an abstract radicalism with a truly Christian and truly sincere application of Christianity to the social problems of the world.

such sciences as seem to bring immediate results. The pastor's study, once the room in which a man humbly subjected himself to the Eternal Word, has become transformed into an office for numerous social agencies; and the sermon is a piece of applied popular ethics as the day requires it. The birthright of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven is sold for the pottage of practical success and immediate influence.

What has happened? The spirit of the West, which is by no means better than the spirit of the East, has absorbed the Christian faith. Instead of standing above the time process and so really dominating it, the Church, forgetting that her conversation is in heaven, has been dragged down into the world and is now driven about with its flotsam, and will ultimately, if this continues, become mere flotsam herself. In this fatal process the term Kingdom of God plays a disastrous rôle. In modern theology and preaching it has been given a meaning directly opposite to that of the New Testament. For in the New Testament it is used in an eschatological, dualistic, and paradoxically non-ethical sense; now it is used in the sense of immanence, evolutionism, and optimistic activism. In the New Testament it means exactly that which man cannot do—the miracle by which God *ends* history and fashions his creation in ways and forms that are beyond imagination, beyond historical analogies, and beyond the reach of ethical attain-

ment. It is a matter of faith and hope and not of man's doing.

Faith and hope, of course, are meant to have practical results, social, world-transforming effects. But they will bring this about only in proportion to the degree of their reality, that is, as they proceed from faith in God and not in man. Faith in God's doing is the salt of the earth which may preserve the world against decay and death. Faith in man, however, is the salt that has lost its savor. It may be produced in large quantities by methods of social and educational psychology, but it is part of the world and therefore cannot preserve it. No one will deny that we must have a live Church which has an actual word to speak in our muddled condition. But what is the use of a Church which, in order to be up to date, has ceased to be a Church? We are losing the foolishness of the gospel because we are ashamed of it; and we are substituting for it a modern religious ethical programme which seems to be better fitted to our generation, but which, in fact, is only the wisdom of man, has no moving power, and ends in mere fussiness.

The ethical question of our time is not how we shall effectively organize our activities, but how the terrific loss of the substance of faith, which in the long run must prove to be the losing of ethical energy, can be regained. For the sake of the ethical activity of the churches this question must be brought to the fore. A Church

whose programme requires adjustment to the world has lost its soul, or is at least in the way of losing it.

Do not misunderstand me. I do not plead that the Church should give up her part in living practical movements, but I do plead that she take cognizance of her present situation and see the abyss toward which she is heading. Christian activity is possible only where there are Christians, and there are Christians only where there is faith. Faith, however, occurs only where the word of God—and not mere religious ideas and ethical ideals—is preached and taught, where men can say as our Reformers said: "The Word alone can do it."

# V

## PROGRESS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

ONE of the most striking differences between American and European mentality to-day seems to me to lie in the fact that American thinking is still dominated by the idea of evolution, while the terrible shocks which Europe has experienced during and since the war have given rise to a searching and critical reconsideration of this conception. This is true not only of theology, but also of philosophy, of the historical and even of the natural sciences. In fact, in some of these realms a strong anti-evolutionist movement has started.

We must be clear from the beginning as to what we are to understand by the word evolution. It has two different, even antagonistic meanings, the one naturalistic, the other idealistic. Both of these are influencing our thinking. The naturalistic idea is nothing more than a widening of the application of the category of causality. Before the nineteenth century the causal explanation of facts was limited to things and events within a given structure; since 1800 the undergirding structure itself has come to be explained causally, that is, to be derived from another, a previous structure. The famous theory of Kant-Laplace explained the form of the solar

system as the result of a disruption of certain parts of the whirling sun; Lyell began to regard the present structure of the surface of the earth as a result of previous structures; and Darwin, with the aid of his theory of selection, tried to solve the riddle of the variety of species by deriving them causally from simpler forms. Evolution owes its enormous attraction to nothing but this unprecedented extension of the causal explanation.

Closely connected with the principle of causality is a second idea: the idea of continuity or monism. Evolution seemed to be the means through which it was possible to conceive the totality of existence as one coherent realm of causally ordered things. The basic concept of naturalistic thinking was the causal uniformity of the phenomenal world. It is not here our task to criticise the evolutionary explanation of the universe. It is evident that it has given an enormous stimulus to scientific research and has led to astonishing results. On the other hand it is evident even to a casual observer that this idea has definite limits. The causal, that is, the evolutionary, explanation is limited to certain phenomena and cannot be extended to others. It is a triviality now to say that one cannot causally explain the origin of life or the organic unity of form. I need only mention the name of Bergson as that of the one who is perhaps the best known, although not by far the most profound,

critic of an unwarranted application of causal evolution.

There is another form of evolutionism, both older and newer than the naturalistic one: the idealistic conception from which the term evolution is derived. In fact Darwinism, strictly speaking, is not a theory of evolution. For *e-volutio* means the coming forth of something that was immanent but latent. This is the heart of the idealistic theory. It is not based upon the concept of things and their causal alteration by other things, but upon the intuition of the mind or self and its alterations from within or by itself. The renowned German thinkers, Leibnitz, Herder, Humboldt, Fichte, Schelling, and, above all, Hegel, based their great systems, their interpretation of the world and of history, upon this idea of evolution. Evolution is taken, in its original sense, as that kind of change in which a subject is not *altered* by external influences but in which it *defines* itself more clearly. The best example of such an inward unfolding we have is the process of thinking. An idea that is at first only semi-conscious, nebulous, and undefined, becomes distinct and clearly defined. It grows from a germ into a more or less integrated organism, although the organism contains nothing but the original germ, which unfolds into the logical conclusions that are contained in it. There is no causal, but there is a logical, necessity in this process. It is not the

evolution of a thing but the evolution of mind.

This second idea of evolution has the same tendency as the first, the tendency to rule despotically. At first it is thinking alone, the unfolding of the idea, that is so interpreted. Then human life and history, as a whole, are explained as the unfolding of latent ideas. It was Hegel, particularly, who gave a magnificent picture of history as the self-evolving of the divine idea. Schelling, at the same time, tried to extend the reach of idealistic evolution over nature, using the Aristotelian idea of the ἐντελέχεια to interpret nature as a sleeping mind, regarding the different levels of life as so many stages in the process of awakening. Thus the totality of existence could be seen as one, not as one thing-world, but as one mind-subject. If this idea at first seems fantastic, it has proved at least as successful and valuable in the field of the historical sciences as the Darwinian theory in the realm of nature. Our historical thinking is imbued with it much more than most people know. If we think of the history of philosophy and of Christian dogma, it is almost impossible not to make use of it.

These two theories of evolution, as irreconcilable as idealism and naturalism, have been competing with each other throughout the last century like two imperialistic empires, each seeking dominion over the world. Of course there have been attempts to combine them; and

it seems to me easy to prove that the science which is called sociology is nothing but such a combination of the two conceptions of evolution. Even Herbert Spencer's philosophy is not purely Darwinistic but is strongly influenced by Hegel. It is evident, however, that such a combination of irreconcilables is no real solution; although there is a middle order of being between mind and thing, namely, organic nature, in which a combination of the two concepts may be valuable or even necessary, as Bergson has shown in his half-idealistic, half-naturalistic concept of creative evolution.

We do not here have to deal with this problem, but we confine our attention to history in its proper sense, from which causal evolution is not excluded. It may be illuminating to explain certain parts of political or economic history by the Darwinian or half-Darwinian hypothesis, that is, by the principle of adjustment or of the survival of the fittest. But to explain by such methods Greek philosophy or the art of Michelangelo, the religion of Zoroaster or the music of Bach, is sheer nonsense, even if it be disguised in very scientific phraseology. The movement of philosophical thought is not effected by causal necessity—the only necessity which the naturalist knows—but by logical necessity. It is therefore much more intelligent to understand the history of mind by the idealistic conception of evolution, as Hegel did. But even this can-

not be done successfully. Idealistic continuity, the unbroken chain of logical necessity, is not to be found in history, not even by Hegel's wonderful dialectical method. For by this method Hegel tries to explain all irrational breaks in history as only apparently irrational, and therefore capable of being explained as actually though not apparently rational. His conception of evolution is based on the optimistic view that whatever is, is rational. In this affirmation he simply fails to do justice to the facts. He does not see that there is at least one factor that is really irrational, being neither causally nor theologically explicable, namely, the free decision of the mind, human personality. Hegel's evolutionism is just as impersonal as Darwin's and, therefore, in spite of its high idealism, it is a disguised naturalizing of mind. In fact evolution of any kind implies the naturalizing of the mind, of personal existence. Mind looked upon as evolving, as developing of necessity, is conceived as part of nature. Now I do not deny that mind is allied to nature, and that in this respect it unfolds or develops. But in just that which makes it truly personal, its power of free decision, its responsibility, personal action, it does not develop and is not driven by impersonal necessity. There is something in personality which cannot be explained causally or teleologically, because it is not logical and is not natural; and that is moral evil, irrational freedom.

We may be best able to grapple with the problem of progress from this point of view. The idea of progress is not very old. It is the child of eighteenth-century liberalism, rationalism, and optimism. This kind of mentality rests, as I pointed out in a previous lecture, on the idealistic dogma of the intrinsic goodness of man, which itself has a pantheistic background. If man is good, how are we to explain evil? An optimistic answer is possible only with the aid of evolution. Evil, in this view, is the good not yet perfect, but in process of becoming. Evil is a not-yet, therefore, a mere lack of something, not a positive will. This negation of evil will or sin, this evolutionary relativity, is the only way by which optimism can be, or seem to be, reconciled with reality. This compromise is made by virtue of a belief in progress.

What are we to think about progress? We certainly cannot deny it. It is an obvious fact in science, theoretical and applied, and in the general rationalization of life. But two questions must be raised. First, where is progress possible? and second, what is its value? There is hardly any one who would claim that art has progressed since the time of the Greeks, the era of Gothic architecture, or the century of Michelangelo's sculpture. Likewise it is nonsense to claim that men to-day are better than they were two thousand years ago. The false generalization of the idea of progress rests on two confusions.

First, the confusing of the natural basis of personal mind with the personal mind itself. The natural basis of mind-life, be it individual or racial, can of course develop by a natural process. But mental personal life is not a simple continuation of this development. It is no longer a natural, and, therefore, no longer an evolutionary, process. It is a matter of personal decision. This power of decision and its effects cannot be wrought by evolution or development. Only the natural basis of decision is subject to development; not decision itself, but only the level *upon* which, and the mental magnitude *in* which, it takes place, is subject to evolution. There is a difference between the decision of an adult and of a child; between the decision of a genius and of an average man. The amplitude of the decision is different but by no means the character of it. Evolution can never be made responsible for my choice of right or wrong, whether I am a boy, an ordinary man, or a genius. Evolution is a matter of mental quantity, not of mental quality.

The second misunderstanding is closely connected with the first. It is the confusing of personal mind itself with the impersonal product of mind. The products of mind can be stored up, and may be said to accumulate, in the course of time. Accumulation, however, may be predicated only of the products of mind and not of personal mind itself. Now this progressive ac-

cumulation saves us from repeating the doing of certain tasks. What others have done, I shall not have to do again; what others have discovered I shall not have to discover. To enter into the labor of others gone before us is an enormous advantage and privilege. But the possibility of it is limited to certain regions of life, and what they are it is not difficult to say. They are the regions on the surface, where mind-life has a natural, even material, character, where quantity plays a larger part than quality, that is, in science, technical work, organization, civilization. But we can hardly speak of progress where creative work must be done; and accumulation is not possible in the centre of personal life, in decision itself. Personal goodness cannot be inherited. Personal goodness, personal faith or devotion, must be one's own act and that at each moment.

This distinction makes possible for us an evaluation of the idea of progress. Its importance is the greater when we are dealing with the periphery of life and the smaller when we are dealing with the centre of personal life. That is why the superficiality of the idea of universal progress becomes most evident in the matter of moral evil. Moral evil, or better, sin, is not as the theory of progress must assume, a not-yet-good: it is a no-more-good. It is not an imperfection but a break; not a not-yet-rational or a not-yet-adjustment but an anti-rational; not a

negative but a negation. And sin is not a dark spot somewhere but is the total character of our personal existence, the character of all our personal acts. Now if man evolves, and he certainly does evolve, the process of evolution does not affect the character of sin; it is not an evolving out of sin but within sin.

If you seek proofs for this statement, turn to history. History is always, although not merely, the history of evolution. But it is always, without the slightest exception, the history of sinful man. If man rises to higher levels of intellectual or cultural life, so does sin. It follows him like his shadow. He cannot get rid of it wherever he may go. For he takes it with him; in fact we ought not to say "it" because the "it" is himself. He is the sinner, and wherever he goes and whatever he does, he goes and does as a sinner. Hegel is right when he says that man's history, viewed on its inward side, is his becoming more and more conscious of himself. But this "himself" is not the God-man, for then evolution would be the process of becoming more and more divine; it is the sinful man, and therefore real evolution is the evolution of the consciousness of sin. But even so we have conceded too much to Hegel. For there is no steady forward movement; it is rather a swinging to and fro like that of a pendulum. If advance is made in one direction, there is bound to be corresponding retrogression in another—as history shows at

every point. At any rate history never is the history of salvation from sin, but rather the history, and partly the evolution, of the sinful man who changes the forms of sin but never really overcomes sin. This is the teaching of history as a whole; and I trust that every man present will tell me that it is the history also of his own life, as I confess it to be that of mine.

But some one asks, How do you reconcile this view with the teaching of the gospel, with the idea of the kingdom of God? Let me submit my answer. I hope it is definite enough to show that what I said about evolution not only does not contradict the teaching of the gospel but is the necessary presupposition for the understanding of it. The teaching of the gospel and the theory of progress are irreconcilable opposites. The acknowledgment of sin as the contradiction of the will of God by the will of man, as the irreparable cleavage in the being of man, as the hopeless confusion of the orders of creation, as the impotence of man to make good where he has done wrong, as the recognition of the contradiction between the *αἰὼν οὗτος* and the *αἰὼν μελλων*, as being more than merely an imperfect stage of development; this acknowledgment is the necessary presupposition of the gospel of the coming kingdom of God.

Let us begin with the Old Testament. In it nothing is known of an evolution of man toward the divine end; nothing of the unfolding of a

divine germ in man's soul into godlikeness. The Old Testament is dominated by the idea that God, the Lord, the Creator, the sovereign King of the world and over the world, comes down in condescending mercy to his poor helpless sinful creatures in order to help and to save them. Not human evolution but the works of God are the subject matter of the Old Testament; not the development of immanent godlikeness but the incredible election of a wild and little-gifted people, which he does not elect for what they are but because of his own free will. And what did he choose them *for*? He chose Israel to be the object of his own actions, of his revelation, the receiver of his word, of his promises, and the messenger of his redemptive words and deeds to the whole world. God alone is the acting subject in the Bible; not Israel nor men of Israel. He, the Eternal, is the hero of this story. His election and revelation, his mercy and help, are always bestowed of his own free volition and not on account of, but rather in spite of, man's character and condition, his will and his deeds. Divine action is always that of incomprehensible grace; its power is always given to man, coming from beyond him, never from within him, not even from the inmost depths of his being. The movement, as we said before, is God's movement toward man, not man's movement toward God. This is the fundamental difference between the Old Testament and all religious books of the

ancient Orient. The great men of God in the old covenant are not *homines religiosi*, like those of other religions; not saints, not mystics who, by their own inner life, find their way to God, who by their unique holiness rise step by step to divine heights. The men of God in the Bible are chosen for no other reason than God's will —and then only to be messengers of his will to the whole world. We do not know anything of their piety, we simply know of the service for which God uses them—in which he often consumes them! Even on this point there is no question of development or evolution; it is a matter not of *e-volutio* but of *in-gressio*, ingression, a breaking into the world of something beyond, something foreign and transcendent. It is not a continuous growth on the horizontal plane of history but a vertical disruption of the historical process by forces interposed from beneath or above; it is the miracle of revelation at the point where man of himself cannot know; it is the miracle of the covenant in which men have nothing to offer except their weakness and sin; the miracle of forgiveness for a sin-burdened people; the miracle of saving promises to a down-trodden and helpless "worm Jacob" crying out of the depths and to a whole world wandering in darkness.

Of course it is not difficult to interpret all this in terms of immanence. One can easily translate "prophet" into "religious genius," revelation

into sudden appearance of subconscious complexes; it is not difficult to explain it all psychologically, subjectively, as a process of evolution. You may do so. But when you do, you must not forget that you are radically changing the sense of the Old Testament into a meaning opposite to that which was originally intended, and are putting into the form of words a content taken from a world of thought wholly different from that of the authors. Creation in that case is no longer creation but becomes evolution, or emanation, or eternal correspondence; sin is no longer sin but a low stage of development; election is no longer election but national arrogance; the personality of God is no longer personality but an abstract immanent principle or feature of the universe; forgiveness is no longer forgiveness but the psychological process of harmonizing discords. This ingenious kind of translation—which is also transformation—is indeed the easiest way to get through with the Old Testament revelation. But in my judgment such interpretation should be called adulteration.

Truly the Old Testament is just as anti-evolutionary as Greek or modern philosophy and Indian or modern mysticism are evolutionary.

The same holds true of the New Testament; here the line of demarcation is even sharper. The basic theme of the New Testament is the eschatological concept of the Kingdom of God, that is, the expectation of the new creation which

is based on faith in the Christ and the assurance that God will soon put an end to the disorder of a world which man cannot set right, for which on the contrary all men are responsible, and which grows worse day by day. God, however, has announced that he will make, yea, has secretly begun in Jesus Christ to make, an end of sin, death, and evil, an end of corruption of all kinds, by a re-creation and a re-constitution of the world. That this idea of the kingdom of God is the direct opposite of the evolutionary idea of it is evident from the fact that a main point in the eschatological hope is the expectation of judgment. That a final judgment will take place before the end and before the advent of the redemptive revolution of all things is a leading idea in all the New Testament writings. Judgment, however, means duality. The New Testament does not expect that things on earth are changing more and more for the good. The opposite is true; the last times shall be the most terrible. No slow progress is expected by which the forces of evil shall be gradually vanquished and the forces of the good gradually become victorious, by which the kingdom of God is continually growing and the kingdom of the world is slowly disappearing. No such evolution is hoped for; indeed, the directly opposite prospect is held out, namely, that the forces of evil must increase until the last day. This is the realism of the New Testament: there is an absence

in it of modern illusionism or ideology. New Testament writers are not blinded by the idea of evolution because they know that the real enemy cannot be overcome step by step. Their conception of the way of victory is not after the analogy of a craftsman who finishes a shoe or a chair, piece by piece. The victory is won not on the periphery but in the centre and in totality. They know that neither sin nor death can be overcome step by step. Death and sin are totalities, not attached parts; they are organic, not artificial, units. The two in fact are a single unit, one corporation. There is only one contradiction in the universe, not many; though its manifestations are manifold. It is this conception of totality that makes it impossible for the writers of the New Testament and for any one who sees this totality to believe in evolution. They do not hope that man will rise higher and higher, that he will become better and better; on the contrary they await the time when it will please God (and no one knows when that time will be, for it will come like lightning and like a thief in the night) to end this world, to end sin and death, through a new creation. Then he will finally separate that which belongs to him and that which does not belong to him, and he will do so by the resurrection of the dead, by the restoration of the original orders of creation, and by their final perfection. The contrast between this idea and the idea of evolution is

sharper and more definite because of the sharp contradiction between the good world of God and the present evil world. It is the contradiction that exists between death and eternal life.

Is the kingdom of God as taught in the New Testament merely eschatological, merely future? I answer: It is exclusively eschatological but it is not merely future. The kingdom of God in its eschatological, transcendent, anti-evolutionary sense is present in Jesus Christ, and therefore it is present in the Christian community or Church through faith in Christ. In Jesus Christ the breaking through into the historical process of the world has begun. In Jesus Christ the other world, which is in opposition to this world, appears. But let us beware of a serious misunderstanding which may even now pervert our insight into New Testament teaching. The New World in Jesus Christ does not appear directly but indirectly. So far as Jesus belongs to the historical world he is the suffering servant of God, he is the Crucified One. His appearance in the world and the appearance of the Kingdom in the world are therefore as yet an *incognito* for the world. They are hidden from it. They can be seen only with the eyes of faith. The cross is the expression of the absolute contradiction between this world and the other; therefore the final expression of God's judgment on one hand and of God's grace on the other. The kingdom of God is here; yes, in this paradoxical

form. One can truly share it, but only in a paradoxical way—through faith, not through sight. Such is also the character of the kingdom of God in the community of the saints, the Church. In what does it consist? In the share the believers have in the heavenly inheritance; so that they, who still belong to the world of sin and death, belong by faith, though not visibly, to the other world, the world to come. They have the Spirit, that is, they are sealed for the coming kingdom. "Our citizenship is in heaven." They *have*, they *are*, they *live* in, the kingdom. But they live in it through faith, indirectly, not directly, invisibly not visibly, paradoxically not empirically. For empirically they are still under the sway of sin and death because they are still in the flesh. To be in the flesh means to belong empirically to the world of sin and death. To believe means to partake in the victory which Christ has won over sin and death. This is the paradox of their existence. It is all important that we keep before us the difference between the empirical relation to the world of sin and the believer's relation to the kingdom of God. Let us be warned against the confusion of the two. For faith, the real is not the empirical but the invisible world of God. The believer only has access to it.

This does not mean that faith has no effect within the empirical world or within man. On the contrary, it has most spectacular effects. It

shows itself in a new life, so different from that which others live that even the pagans cannot help wondering at and admiring it. It becomes evident in the manifold gifts of the spirit. It works upon the empirical world so as to effect great changes in the historical process. But all these changes, however great, do not result in the kingdom of God. They are the reflection of it, but not the kingdom itself. They are relative, imperfect, dubious, a mixture of the old and new. They are not the victory over the world, for the best Christians are sinners and become ill and die; but they are signs and anticipations of a victory won in the realm of the invisible world, a victory that some time will become, but is not now, visible. Therefore one cannot speak of an evolution of the Kingdom of God. One may speak of the extension of the Christian community or Church; one may also say that the influence of faith and the Spirit upon the empirical world is growing in an individual or in a certain group or in a certain time. But in such expansion or growth there is not the least analogy to evolution. For evolution is continuous: this movement is not. Evolution is growth from within but this growth is from without. Evolution is always immanent; the Kingdom, from the beginning to the end, is transcendent, for faith rests alone on that which God does. Evolution is direct; the growth of one thing means the lessening of some other. But this movement of

the Kingdom is indirect; the growth of the wheat is accompanied by the growth of the tares. Therefore the end of this paradoxical development is not a net gain, but a crisis-judgment.

One of the most fatal errors in the history of theology is the identification of the Biblical idea of the Kingdom with the rationalistic evolution and the optimistic theory of progress of the eighteenth century. It was Kant who started this unfortunate business; it was Schleiermacher, and after him Ritschl, who continued it. Under the strong influence of the Ritschlian school through the leadership of Hermann and Harnack, it entered the preaching and teaching of the Church and became the leading idea of modern theology, especially when combined with the social emphasis in Christian ethics. This school grievously confused the Christian faith in the will of God with anti-Christian optimism, and salvation by faith alone with a wholly anti-Biblical moralism and human self-reliance. How was this confusion possible? If I am not mistaken, it was due to a misunderstanding of the phrase in the gospel—the Kingdom of God *coming upon the earth.* In the New Testament this means that the heavenly world is coming down upon the earth, that Death is swallowed up in victory. The movement in the whole Bible is described as earthward, not heavenward. But this movement is from God, not from man; the contrast to the evolutionary process is not in any

way minimized by the fact that the kingdom comes upon the earth. It is heaven that comes upon earth; God who comes to men. But modern rationalism gave the word "on earth" an absolutely un-Biblical interpretation when it identified its coming on earth with the evolutionary ethical process in history.

Thus the eschatological teaching of the New Testament was changed into a rationalistic, optimistic, evolutionary philosophy of history. The confusion was, and is, fatal. For the emphasis of the Bible is now completely inverted. In the Bible it is put upon God's doing; in modern pseudo-Christian evolutionism it is put upon man's doing. In the Bible attention is fixed upon what God has done in Christ for men and what God will do for man in the end; but in the modern view attention is fixed upon the process of historical evolution and not upon Christ. Our contemporaries do not believe Christ to be the Son of God and are not interested in an end which lies on the farther side of history.

Biblical Christianity does not deny either evolution or progress or the importance of an ethical and social application of faith. It does distinguish, however, the sphere in which relativity prevails from the sphere of the absolute, in which God both is and works his will. It is not pessimistic; in fact it is the only real and possible optimism. But it denies most vehemently any optimistic outlook upon the historical process

as such. History is not the evolution of salvation, as the Hegelian idea has it; history is the evolution of a mankind needing and obtaining salvation through faith in Christ. But, while history is viewed pessimistically as the world of sin and death which must perish, an absolute optimism is to be found in the assurance of salvation, not by gradual betterment through evolution, but by God's will through Christ; an optimism which no modern theologian possesses and which is more and more disappearing where the modern gospel of the so-called kingdom of God is taught. The optimism of Christian faith is that of the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the certainty that the mortal shall put on immortality, that the eternal world will come, that God himself will be seen face to face, in an inconceivable but real personal presence. It is this hope which made our fathers strong not only in prayer but also in work, which enabled them to do things of which our generation only talks—real things. Our present Christianity abounds in activities but lacks action. The anti-evolutionary optimism of Christian faith is the true basis of a really active Christian life.

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